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The Drama

VICTORIAN EDITION

The Drama

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ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE
AND INFLUENCE ON
CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ALFRED BATES, M.A.
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

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L'AFFAIRE CLÉMENCEAU

After an original painting by F. Lejeune

In L'Affaire Clemenceau of Alexander Dumas the younger, dramatized by D'Artois, is the story of a depraved heroine whom the husband slays, a vivid picture of life as seen by Dumas in his younger days of dissipation.

D'ARTOIS' L'AFFAIRE CLÉMENCEAU, DRAMATIZED FROM THE
ROMANCE OF DUMAS



French Drama

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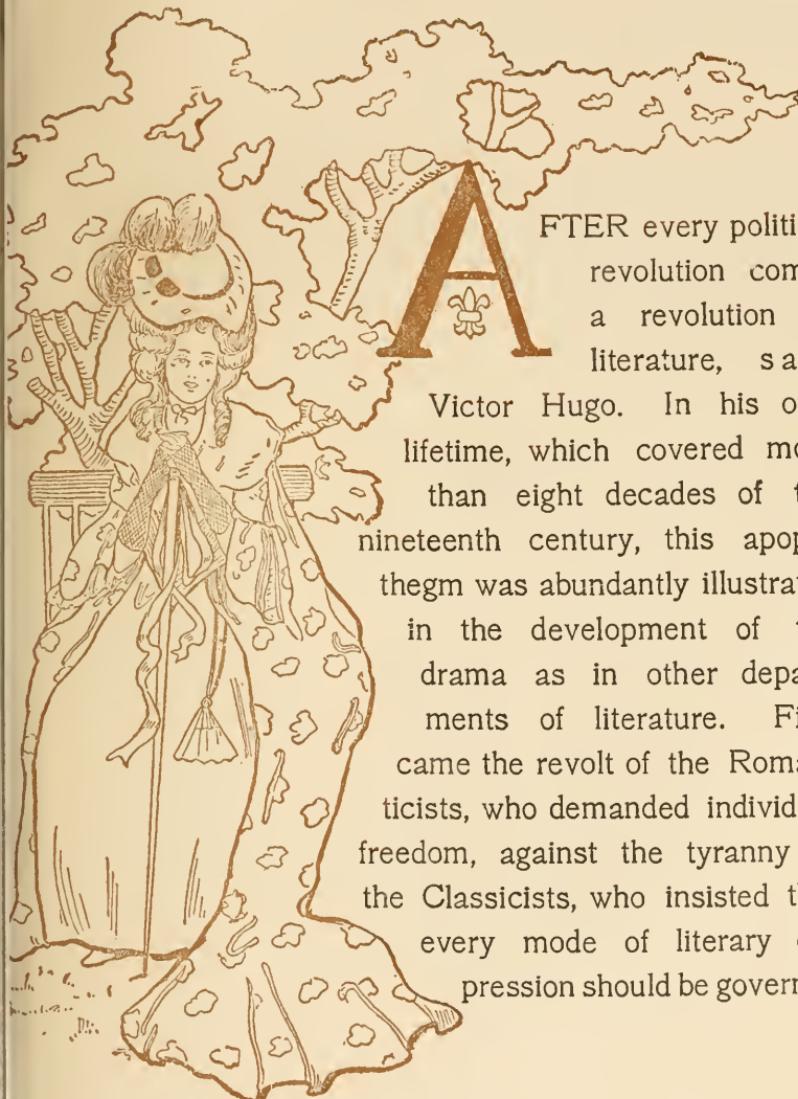
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Prologue



AFTER every political revolution comes a revolution in literature, said Victor Hugo. In his own lifetime, which covered more than eight decades of the nineteenth century, this apophthegm was abundantly illustrated in the development of the drama as in other departments of literature. First came the revolt of the Romanticists, who demanded individual freedom, against the tyranny of the Classicists, who insisted that every mode of literary expression should be governed

PROLOGUE

by arbitrary rules. In the hotly contested struggle in the theatre, Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas led the van, the former with the beautiful and deeply tragical *Hernani*, the latter with the blood-stirring *Henri III*. In spite of the entrenched opposition of managers, actors, censors and critics, the Romanticists won their way to the stage, and the public applauded their victory.

In the era of peace which followed, Eugène Scribe was the popular dramatist, and maintained his eminence with a long series of ingeniously complicated comedies and domestic tragedies. His published works fill sixty volumes, and as many more plays were performed without being printed. The public never complained, yet seemed at last to have become weary of the automatic monotony of Scribe and his imitators.

The *coup d'état* of 1851 made way for a more daring presentation of contemporary life. In the new movement into a hitherto unexplored region the younger Dumas was the pioneer with his pathetic *Dame aux Camélias*, which has since been enacted throughout the civilized world. To this famous masterpiece of realism he added various dramatic discussions of the woman ques-

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tion and social problems. Augier recognized the dangerous tendency of such plays, and rushed to the aid of the home and homely virtue, but without obtaining the world-wide hearing accorded to Dumas.

In the Second Empire, Sardou also came to the front, following somewhat in the footsteps of Scribe, but attaining higher rank. When a new Republic was established, he introduced journalistic methods into the theatre and discussed every question of the day in its turn, whether social, political or ethical.

Lastly, after realism had been thoroughly domesticated on the stage, naturalism reared its ugly front and claimed the right to be seen and heard in the world of art. The scavenger, Zola, in spite of loud protests, mounted the stage and set his puppets to work at their vile occupation. It must be admitted that in the works of the best French dramatists lawless love is too frequently the theme. Even those who wish to be considered moral often affront propriety. Their works, when turned into English, must be toned down and adapted to a different code of morals. Yet virtue and decency are not banished from the

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French stage; they are still approved and applauded, while vice and crime, after being too freely exposed, are execrated and punished.

This volume gives the history of the French drama for the past century, with sufficient examples to prove it the most fertile and brilliant in the world,



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French Drama.

I.

The Beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century the drama in France had steadily declined from the glorious position which it had achieved in the reign of Louis XIV. The genius of Voltaire, by its stage-reforms and innovations, had partially stayed the downward movement in tragedy, and the philosophic Diderot had sought to substitute for mirthful comedy a new species—the serious—which should be an agent of social reform, and in fact the consummation of dramatic art as a mirror of life. Classical tragedy had been weighted down by the artificiality of the court in every direction, and thus made a beautiful monster. The plays of the new style, vaguely called *drames*, were intended to be true to life and to inculcate the proper principles of society. The idea had already been advanced in the dreams of various social philosophers, but for obvious reasons no attempt had been made to reduce it to practice. Diderot, though an able writer in other departments, failed as a dramatist, but some who had adopted his idea had better suc-

cess. The most remarkable dramatist of the period, however, was Beaumarchais, who boldly revived the old Spanish comedy of intrigue. He not only surpassed his predecessor in the skillful framing of plots, but drew his characters with peculiar truth. His dialogue was brilliant with flashes of wit, and his plays were charged with social satire. His *Figaro*, with its search-light illumination of the old régime, became a warning beacon of the approaching Revolution. But taken altogether, the drama of this period is rather of historic interest than actual value. It consists of imitations of the great works of the classic age, themselves imitations of antiquity, or imperfect attempts at reform and extension. It became thoroughly mechanical and lost artistic value. "French tragedy," said Goethe, with not undue severity, "is a parody of itself."

The Drama Under the First Empire.

Political changes had a marked effect on the French theatre, yet comparatively little on the drama. The Revolution proclaimed, among other liberties, that of theatres, and fifty were soon open in Paris. The tragic poet of the period was M. J. de Chénier, who wrote *Charles IX*, an historical drama with a political moral. Though Chénier fell a victim to the guillotine at the early age of thirty, the actor Talma achieved his first success in that play and lived to become the favorite of Napoleon. Under the empire the theatres came under the direct control of the government. The number in Paris was limited to nine, and each was restricted to

a certain class of plays. To the Théâtre Français was reserved the exclusive right to present the masterpieces of Corneille, Racine, Molière and Voltaire. Minor theatres might produce melodramas, vaudevilles or operas-comiques. Napoleon wished to encourage the drama, and offered prizes for the best tragedy, but he failed to secure a great dramatist to give lustre to his reign.

In spite of the glory which Napoleon's victories won for France, and with which its people were intoxicated, their intellectual condition under his rule was pitiful in the extreme. The grand ideals to which their noblest minds had so recently aspired became a laughing-stock. From those pure and lofty visions of humanity and the noble motto—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—which they had cherished for themselves and even sought to impose on a reluctant world, their leaders now turned away with foolish contempt. Liberty, so highly prized, so dearly purchased, was crushed under an accumulation of mischances and adversities which seemed to be the natural outcome of the Revolution. Statesmen declared the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire the logical result of the Revolution. The philosophic historian sees in them the inevitable backward swing of the mighty pendulum of human government. The new chief of state claimed by his acts what Louis XIV had expressed in words, “*L'état, c'est moi*”—I am the State. His envy was kindled by the seventeenth century, that golden age of literature and art, and he trusted to renew and surpass its beauty and fertility, as he was able to enact a new and better code of laws. But the con-

queror of Italy and Germany could not restore life to the noble victims of the guillotine nor renew the inspiration of departed genius. The entire intellectual and spiritual product of the Empire—its literature and philosophy, its arts and music—are the debased outcome of imperial despotism.

The fondness for classical tragedies which had lasted through the convulsions of the Revolution and the Empire remained after the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbons. The emigrant nobles, on their return, found the drama on the stage as they had left it. Tragedy was strictly bound by the unities of time, place and action, which have already been fully discussed, and the new writers who attempted it lacked the inventive power of their predecessors. Comedy fared better, and many writers who wrought in this department produced plays which have not suffered the complete eclipse that has befallen contemporary tragedies. They imitated Beaumarchais rather than Molière. Among them may be named Andrieux, Picard, Alexandre Duval and Népomucène Lemercier.

But when the despot Napoleon was overthrown and France was again subjected to the Bourbon tyranny and misrule, where was there any prospect or hope of her intellectual redemption? Her ideals of the moral world had been shattered and destroyed. The gaudy balloon of the republic, whose apparition had but lately startled the nations, had soon been rent in mid air by the explosion of its own motive power. Monarchy was restored to the Bourbons, who had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The old institutions were to be rebuilt where

the very foundations had been destroyed by moral earthquakes. To what period in her past history or to what nation beside herself could France turn for models in reconstruction? Two great writers of the time offered replies to the grand question of the time—Chateaubriand and Madame de Stael—replies widely variant, yet each having a substantial amount of truth.

Influence of Chateaubriand and Madame de Stael.

From the literary, no less than from the political, point of view the chief interest of the time belongs to Chateaubriand and Madame de Stael, whose writings did much to inaugurate the new movement which was to alter the character of French literature. Chateaubriand had visited America and seen something of savage life in the wilderness, which afterward formed the basis of picturesque and ideal descriptions. He was also a champion of the restoration of the Catholic religion, whose rites and churches had been wantonly assailed and overthrown in the French Revolution, yet had been reinstated in their former place under Napoleon. Chateaubriand regarded Christianity as “the most poetical of all religions, the most attractive, the most fertile in literary, artistic and social results.” To prove this thesis and impress it on the minds and hearts of his countrymen he wrote his two splendid works, the *Genius of Christianity* and *The Martyrs*, which, by their powerful appeal to history and their imaginative beauty, had enormous influence on succeeding literary development. Madame de Stael, exiled by

Napoleon, wandered to Germany and there became acquainted with Goethe and Schiller and their surroundings. Her description of this country in *De l'Allemagne* opened up to the rising generation in France treasures of literature and philosophy till then entirely unknown. Her romances, *Delphine* and *Corinne*, also led the imagination in new fields. Different as were the spirit, aim and style of these two writers, they combined in their enthusiasm in inaugurating what has become known as Romanticism.

The Rise of Romanticism.

Chateaubriand revived a longing for the simple faith of the mediaeval church and the beauties of chivalry. This was fostered by the writings of Sir Walter Scott, which were eagerly welcomed in France. A periodical called *La Muse Française* enlisted the services of ardent royalists, among whom were Victor Hugo and De Vigny. Then war was declared against classicism in the drama, which was supported chiefly by writers of the Liberal party. The Romantics formed a club called the *Cénacle*, in which Hugo was the chief poet and Sainte-Beuve the chief critic. Political divisions became less prominent, and literary sympathies alone formed the bond of union. The movement was violently opposed, and members of the Academy petitioned the king to forbid the representation of any Romantic piece at the Théâtre Français. On the other hand the more violent members of the club declared its object to be the burning of everything which had been adored, and the adoring of everything which had been burnt. They

rejected the established canons of the classic drama—the unities, the arbitrary selection of subjects, the restrictions on the use of words, the requirements of periphrasis instead of plain speech, the cultivation of artificial beauty. These enthusiasts wished to hear in the drama, as the language of passion and emotion, the words in common use. The Romantics were sometimes designated as the flamboyant, referring to the gay and picturesque attire affected by some of their most enthusiastic adherents, as well as their literary style. The conservative Classicists were called grisâtre, or graybeard, which might also denote the gray and monotonous color of their poetry.

After several preliminary skirmishes the struggle culminated at the representation of Victor Hugo's *Hernani* in February, 1830. Both parties assembled in force, one prepared to applaud, the other to hiss. Cries arose as the play proceeded, and even blows were struck. But the Romantic play was kept on the stage for two months, and the fierceness of the fight gradually subsided. The Romantics had won the day, though they had by no means suppressed the opposition. It lasted throughout the reign of Louis Philippe. The younger men of letters were all Romantics.

What is Romanticism?

Romanticism has been defined in various ways, both by its advocates and by its opponents, and, indeed, by the historians who sought to be impartial. It was plainly a revolt against the enforcement of the rules which

had been framed in the golden age of French literature as representing the best practice of the best writers. But these rules had been interpreted in a narrow spirit and enforced in an arbitrary manner by succeeding generations of critics. Scant allowance was made for the necessary growth of language, and for the introduction of new ideas and forms of thought. The classic literature belonged to the court and was modeled by strict rules of etiquette, which were out of harmony with the wider view of life and nature struggling for expression. Romanticism gave liberty to the author to express his thought in such terms as seemed to him most appropriate, without regard to what his predecessors had said. It refused to be trammelled by the notions of the French lawgiver Boileau, of the seventeenth century, or by the principles of the philosopher Aristotle, who wrote three centuries before Christ. It vindicated the rights of the modern world, and of each individual in that world, to utter and write his message to his fellow-men. It was individualistic.

Yet, in actual practice it did not depart so widely from the standards already established, as either its opponents feared or its advocates claimed the right to do. Victor Hugo wrote his *Hernani* in rhymed Alexandrines, and observed many other conventionalities of the drama. The conservatives had been trained to criticise minute variations from the rules, and they doubted whereto these vaunted reforms would grow. The Romantics had themselves been trained in the same school and, as a matter of course, retained much of the old discipline. They knew that this was necessary if they

were to be heard and understood by the people. Their changes were limited to lessening the restraint and relaxing the bonds of the old rules. They did not destroy and burn as they had threatened. The new liberty was found to be moderate, pleasing to the imagination and satisfactory to the calm judgment. If at times proper bounds were overstepped, criticism, rational and not arbitrary, could intervene to correct the error.

Results of Romanticism.

Although the battle of the Romanticists and Classicists was fought on the field of the drama, its principal results are not found there. The dramatic changes have not been of the greatest value or most permanent character. What is chiefly seen in the theatre is the prevalence of tragi-comedy, which the French call *drame*, a modified mixture of the old divisions of the art. It admits a greater variety of personages on the stage, and rejects the stock characters of the old style. It even allows that disjointed action, which has always been characteristic of the English stage, but was positively prohibited by the canons of the French, and even of the Greek theatre. After Victor Hugo's early battles for greater freedom had been fought to a successful conclusion, Alexandre Dumas came forward with a still more melodramatic style of the *drame*, and his plays also served as rallying points for the Romantics in their long contest. The chief of these were *Henry III* and *Antony*, in which new elements of strife were injected, especially with regard to morality. *La Tour de Nesle*

was also a fruitful source of discussion, the question of authorship being involved. Alexandre Soumet and Casimir Delavigne adhered more closely to the old models and won support from the Classicists. Soumet's dramas were *Norma* and *Une Fête de Neron*, while Delavigne presented *Marino Faliero* and *Louis XI*. Still later, Ponsard was leader in a kind of classical reaction with his *Lucrèce*, *Charlotte Corday* and other historical plays.

The most prominent and fertile producer of comic plays was Eugène Scribe, who poured out shoals of vaudevilles and high comedies which had immense popularity. A new variety of comedy was introduced under the name of *Proverbes*, slight dramatic sketches in which the dialogue is of more importance than the action. In this class the poet Alfred de Musset specially distinguished himself. The titles of his pieces are self-explanatory, as *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*—A door must be open or shut; *On ne badine pas avec L'amour*—There's no trifling with love.

II.

Victor Hugo.

As Voltaire was the virtual sovereign and universal genius of French literature in the eighteenth century, so with even better right was Victor Hugo in the nineteenth. Both lived to a great age and maintained to the end their literary power and fertility. Both outlived most of the opposition and rivalry which had beset their respective careers, and toward the end enjoyed extraordinary personal triumphs in the capital from which they had long been exiled. Victor Hugo's exaltation was even greater than Voltaire's, for he received honors and congratulations not from Paris only, but from all parts of the world. Voltaire's body after his death was hurriedly conveyed to a distance and hastily committed to the grave, lest ecclesiastical authority might even then show its condemnation by depriving it of decent burial. But Victor Hugo's remains were honored with a state burial and a spontaneous demonstration of public grief surpassing in pomp and magnificence any that had been awarded to departed royalty. What had this uncrowned king done to merit this unique tribute? He was, perhaps, regarded by many as the victorious cham-

pion and spokesman of the democracy of the world. But his real triumphs were not in his political career, which was full of inconsistency, but in his sublime odes, in his powerful dramas and his still more powerful novels, in which he pleaded the cause of the oppressed and outcast.

In his *Feuilles d'Automne*—Autumn Leaves—and in other writings Hugo has given sketches of his life, as he wished the world to see and admire it. The biography, professing to be “related by a witness of his life,” and attributed to his wife, was largely written by himself with characteristic exaggerations and embellishments. With all his genuine love of humanity, extending to the vicious and degraded, there was joined an overweening vanity which demanded that mankind must be interested in him and his doings. As he lived long in public view in an era of unprecedented activity of the press, the records of his career are abundant from every point of view. But his literary works must be their own vouchers at the bar of the world’s judgment.

For our purpose we cannot do better than give the substance of Prof. Brander Matthews’ verdict on Victor Hugo’s dramas. He finds that they are melodramas written by a poet, rather than poetic plays written by a dramatist. In Molière’s works, as in Shakespeare’s, the man is superior to the event; but in Hugo’s, as in Calderon’s and in Corneille’s, the situation dominates the characters. Unlike Calderon’s and Corneille’s, Hugo’s plays are not poetic in conception, however poetic they may be in verbal clothing. Neither for the plots nor the personages can this be claimed. The plot is

melodramatic, but the best of melodrama, because of its simplicity and strength, and because it is the work of a man of heavier mental endowment than is possessed by the common writer of melodrama.

Melodramatic as the situations and characters are, however, the best of Hugo's plays are still poetic; for Victor Hugo was a great poet, although not a great dramatic poet. His plays, while they are melodramas in structure, are the work of an artist in elaboration. The joints of the plot are hidden, and the hollowness of the characters is cloaked by the ample folds of a poetic diction of unrivalled richness. The splendor of this lyric speech blinds us at first to the lack of inner and vital poetry in the structure it decks so royally. Although, therefore, his plays are effective in performance, and his characters wear at times the externals of poetic conception, Victor Hugo was not a dramatic poet of the highest class.

Hugo's Boyhood.

Victor Hugo was born at Besançon, February 28th, 1802, the third son of General Count Joseph Leopold Hugo. His father, an old soldier, had remained in the French army, though not a favorite with Napoleon, yet esteemed by his brother Joseph, who was made king of Spain. Victor's mother, by birth a Vendean, was a devout royalist, and such he became in his youth under her training. He displayed astonishing precocity, and in boyhood filled copybooks with verses which he long afterward labelled "The follies I wrote before my

birth." A year of his childhood was spent in Spain, and recollections of the people and country formed part of his literary equipment. At the age of fifteen he competed for a prize offered by the Academy for a poem on "The Happiness Derived from Study," but the examiners, believing that the author could not be so young as stated in the verses, granted him only honorable mention. Soon the truth was discovered, and Chateaubriand, then at the height of his fame, hailed Hugo as "the sublime child." Later he won similar prizes from the Academy and elsewhere.

Inez de Castro.

Hugo's inclination to the drama was also early manifested. Among the productions of his boyhood not preserved are mentioned two tragedies and a comic opera. But *Inez de Castro*, said to have been written at the age of sixteen, is given in full by the "witness of his life," possibly with some later touches. It is a melodrama in three acts, with two interludes. The story is one much used by Spanish dramatists. The play shows a disregard of the unities, a mingling of the comic and serious, a love of the marvellous and an abundant use of local color. All these features he afterward defended, and even declared to be essential to proper dramatic exhibition of life. But that a boy of sixteen should have exemplified these principles seems inexplicable. Among the strange scenes in the play is one in the tomb of the king; another, still more gloomy, is in a vast hall draped with black and containing a throne

and a scaffold surrounded by guards in black and red and executioners in penitents' robes, with torches in their hands. The tense emotion of the drama is singularly relieved by the introduction of prattling children, for whom Hugo often showed special fondness in later works. An element never afterward employed was a ghost, but various scenes of this boyish drama seem to recur with modifications in his best plays.

Hugo's First Publication.

After the restoration of the Bourbons Count Hugo was deprived of his command and lived in retirement at Blois. But Victor remained with his mother at Paris in an abandoned convent and in straitened circumstances. Even after her death he continued loyal to her religious and political creed, as his odes abundantly testify. By the aid of his brother Abel, a volume of these was published in 1822, and a second in 1824, which not only brought him some sorely needed money but also secured for him a pension from the king. The poet was thus enabled to marry his cousin, Adèle Foucher, to whom he had been betrothed in infancy, and for whom he cherished a real affection. Their domestic life was happy and, save by the loss of some children, unclouded to its close.

Although Hugo was then a royalist and legitimist, as well as a fervent Catholic, the influence of Romanticism was already manifest in his poetry. He rejected traditional rules and classical mythology, and appealed to the primary religious sentiments. He could say, "My

songs fly toward God as the eagle toward the sun, for to the Lord I owe the gift of speech." At that period, indeed, it was the Romantics that looked back with admiration to the faith of the Middle Ages, while the Classics were liberals in politics and often disciples of Voltaire. Victor joined his brother Abel in editing *Le Conservateur Littéraire*, and in it published *Bug Jargal*, a story of the insurrection of the negroes in Hayti in 1793. It was afterward enlarged and improved, but even its earliest form was remarkable. The hero is a slave who had been a prince in his native Africa. He had fallen in love with Marie, the beautiful daughter of a wealthy planter, and betrothed to a French officer, D'Auverney, who relates the story. To rescue the lady from the impending massacre, even though she is never to be his, the magnanimous negro performs numerous exploits of grand heroism, and finally sacrifices his life for his beloved. Among the other characters are the negro chief Biassou, the leader of the rebels, and the villainous dwarf Habribah, who is finally swept by a fierce torrent into a gloomy abyss. Thus in his earliest prose romance, published anonymously, Hugo showed the same fondness for the weird, the grotesque and horrible, mingled with love for the delicate and beautiful, which was to be displayed on a grander scale in the thrilling dramas and powerful novels of his later life.

Another wildly romantic story was *Hans d'Islande*, whose hero was a bandit chief of Norway, with a huge bear as a terrible assistant. Like other Romantics, Hugo did not hesitate to go far abroad to unknown lands

for scenes of romances and dramas. He said, himself, of this story, that the only part based on personal experience was the love of a young man, and the only part based on observation was the love of a young girl. It was, therefore, the first fruits of his own love and marriage. To the tales of travellers were due the description of the frozen North, and to the author's active imagination and matchless literary skill the narration of perilous adventures and deeds of daring. The effect of the story is heightened by the grotesque humor which is found in many of Hugo's works, and by the tender pathos, albeit the latter is sometimes forced. It must also be admitted that Hugo's work at this period was somewhat turgid and bombastic, as the result of his freedom from all restraint, and especially from the chaste and sobering influences of his mother's training, thus leaving him at liberty to indulge in fantastic flights.

Hugo's Romanticism was still further displayed in his *Odes et Ballades*, 1826, and completely manifested in *Les Orientales*, 1829. The subjects of these splendid odes were drawn from the brilliant East, which classic taste condemned as barbarous lands; the conventional poetical diction was rejected; homely native words and expressions were freely used; foreign words and phrases were admitted when necessary in describing foreign scenery or customs; broken, irregular metres were employed instead of the long Alexandrines, which had become almost the only correct verse in classic French. In former poems Hugo had imitated and then surpassed Lamartine; now he was following in the track of Byron, in subjects and methods of treatment. Warm

discussion followed in France, and Hugo defended his work in brilliant essays.

Hugo's *Cromwell*.

But the contest between the Romanticists, daily growing bolder, and the gray-beard Classicists, who felt their power slipping from them, had to be decided in the theatre, then the supreme court of literature in France. Hugo's predilection for the drama has already been seen. Now he became leader of the enthusiastic Romanticists who had formed the Cénacle or club in 1824. To exemplify his views of what the drama ought to be, he made a sketch of his *Cromwell*, intending the character for Talma, the greatest actor of his time. Talma heard him recite some scenes and accepted the part. But before the drama was finished the actor died, and Hugo decided to publish the play without having it performed. It was, indeed, considerably enlarged, so that its length made it unfit for acting, and Hugo prefixed a dissertation in which he proclaimed his views and methods. Swinburne, poet and critic of high order, indulges in extravagant praise of *Cromwell* for "poetry and thought, passion and humor, subtle truth of character, stately perfection of structure, facile force of dialogue and splendid eloquence of style." What more can be needed to make it the greatest drama of the nineteenth century? And yet it certainly is not that. It is, on the other hand, a splendid attempt of a youthful genius to combine the merits and power of the English and the French ideals of the drama without the neces-

sary preliminary practice in either. Its first line was a shock to classic taste, for it was merely a date, an echo of an almanac. Contrary to French tradition, the play brings a large number of persons on the stage, and, while it does not widely depart from the unities of time and place, it fails to preserve the much more essential unity of action. The play turns on the question, Will the Protector become king of England? Each successive act answers it in a contradictory way until it is decided finally in the negative. It departs widely from the facts of history, and has little regard for the truth of character. The main personages are set in unnatural, overwrought contrast, and the minor excite little interest or none at all. The action is forced and the effect melodramatic. And yet the whole is unmistakably a great work of a great poet.

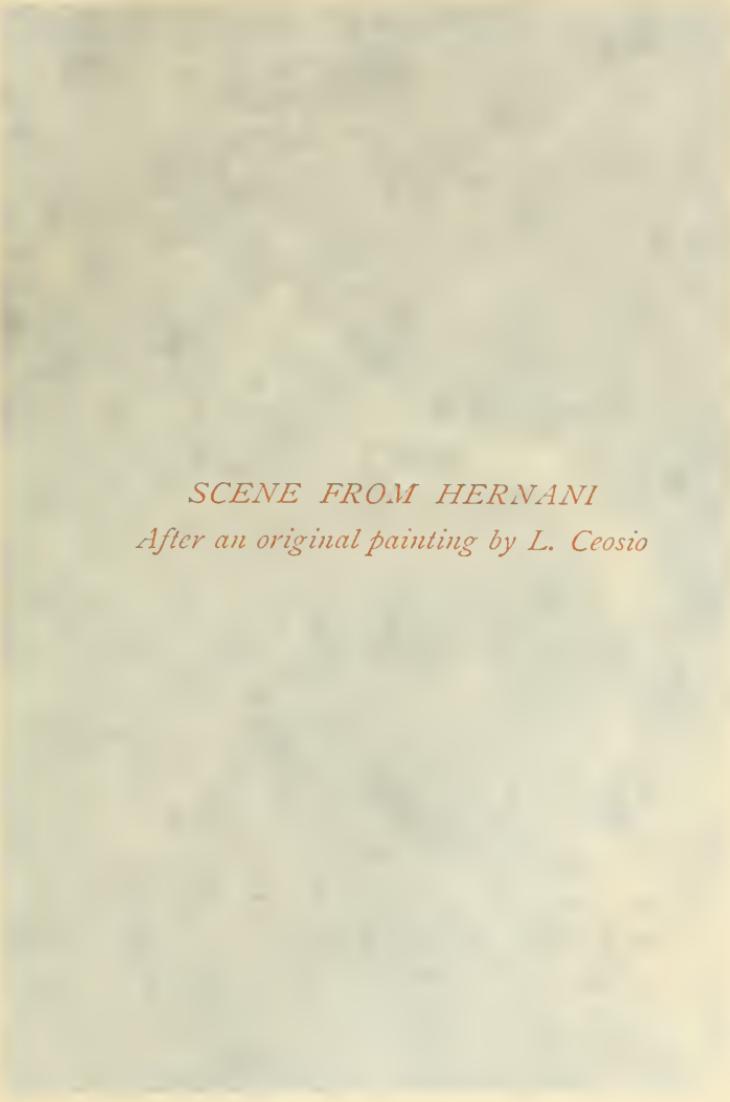
Romantic Plays.

As *Cromwell* was never performed, the labor on it was fruitless at the time. The true issue was avoided—could a Romantic play succeed on the French stage? Hugo returned to the attack in the next year with *Amy Robsart*, a play which he had sketched in his nineteenth year. It was based on an incident in Scott's *Kenilworth*, and as Hugo now thought it beneath his dignity to borrow a subject, he handed it over to his brother-in-law, Paul Forcher. It was brought out anonymously, however, was hissed and withdrawn after a single performance. Hugo then publicly took the blame of the failure. In 1829 he wrote *Marion Delorme*, which was

warmly applauded by a select gathering of literary notables, but was disapproved by the royal censor, who objected to some words put in the king's mouth, which he feared might receive a modern application. Hugo refused to strike out the expression, and the king prohibited the publication, though he offered as a salve to the wounded author an increase of his pension. But Hugo declined the offer. Notwithstanding the prohibition, *Marion Delorme* was afterward produced at the Français with the success which it well deserved; for it is beyond doubt one of the finest of Hugo's dramas, and was written in all the vigor of his genius.

Hernani.

A fourth play was now written, one of the most famous in dramatic annals—*Hernani, ou l'Honneur Castillan*. It was accepted by the censor and manager, and was first presented on Saturday night, February 25, 1830. Hugo had announced that he would employ no claque or hired applauders, a customary practice in French theatres. But his partisans, roused for the conflict, assembled in full force. They wore red badges with the Spanish word *hierro*—iron—which Hugo himself had distributed. They were led by the enthusiastic Théophile Gautier, who had arrayed himself in extravagant style for the occasion—green trousers and crimson waistcoat, above which rose his long, yellow leonine mane. The Classics were not less numerous, and recalled their previous victories. The boxes were filled with persons distinguished in rank, letters or art,



SCENE FROM HERNANI

After an original painting by L. Ceosio

In Hernani, as W. H. Pollock remarks, "every audience with somebody sparing the life of somebody else, save the last, in which all the chief characters, except Charles V., die together."

SINGULAR HERNANI VICTOR HUGO



1.1.1

who joined in the tumult which arose as the play proceeded. The disorder proceeded from cries to blows, but Hugo's party rejoiced in a virtual, if not decisive, victory. The press generally condemned the play, but it was repeated night after night for two months. The bitter contest continued, often with serious outbreaks. In the end there was hardly a line that had not been the object of applause or hisses, or both. But the Romantics had won the right of having their new style of plays heard without molestation.

What now was the real character of this hotly-contested drama? It is no longer familiar even on the French stage, but it has survived in the Italian opera *Ernani*. The story is entirely fictitious, this being a characteristic on which Hugo prided himself in all his great works. Don Carlos is intended to suggest the Emperor Charles V, but no incident in this illustrious sovereign's career bears any resemblance to the story here presented. Ruy Gomez, a grand example of proud Spanish nobility, has, in spite of his advanced age, fallen deeply in love with his beautiful niece, Doña Sol; but she has given her youthful affection to the mysterious bandit, Hernani. The king himself has also felt the power of her charms and seeks her for his own. What more striking contrast can be presented than that among the lovers—the king, the noble, the bandit—emphasized by the differences of age and rank? Hernani comes into the power of Ruy Gomez, who spares his life on receiving his hunting-horn, with the pledge that the bandit shall take his own life whenever he hears that horn. The nobleman and bandit, seeking re-

venge against the king, form a conspiracy. The king, however, is elected Roman emperor, and is transformed in character by the honor. He surprises the conspirators, but with gracious magnanimity pardons their crime. Hernani is found to be a noble who had been unjustly deprived of his rank and possessions. They are restored to him with the title Don Juan of Aragon. The emperor has yielded his claim on Doña Sol, and she is wedded to her lover. But Ruy Gomez is implacable, and in the midst of their rapture, after the wedding feast, Hernani hears, from outside, the sound of the fatal horn. The poison, prepared by Ruy Gomez, is at hand. Hernani's honor has been pledged, and even though he sacrifices love as well as life, he must keep his word. He drinks from the fatal cup, but his wife drains the same, and they die in an ecstasy of devotion and self-sacrifice. To this powerful climax is no doubt largely due the decisive victory which finally ended the long vexed controversy between the Classic and Romantic schools of dramatists and novelists.

Few effects have ever been produced on the stage which exceed in power and pathos the climax of this great tragedy. No more thrilling catastrophe can be imagined than the swift plunge from the bliss of perfect happiness and security which the newly-wedded pair were entering and enjoying down to the fearful alternative of death or dishonor, forcibly signalled by the startling note of the fatal horn. But the abiding popularity of the play, when the storm of its launching had subsided, was due to its swiftness in action, the lyrical beauty of its poetry and the enchanting pictures of

youthful love and fidelity, emphasized rather than destroyed by the heartrending catastrophe.

Marion Delorme.

The defeat of the Classicists in the theatre was soon followed by the revolution of July, 1830. The Bourbon king was driven from the throne by a rising of the people of Paris, and the Orleanist, Louis Philippe, took his place as king of the French. Hugo, who had been acknowledged as the poet laureate of the Bourbon Legitimists, had gradually been estranged by the folly of their government, their hatred of liberty and their harsh treatment of warriors like his father, who had contributed to the glory of France. He shared the enthusiasm of the new leaders and looked for a renewal of his country's greatness.

It was under the constitutional régime that *Marion Delorme* was put on the stage, scoring a success, after a struggle like that which greeted its predecessor. It had a run of sixty-three nights. It was in some respects more faithful to the principles which Hugo had laid down in the preface to his *Cromwell*. It is superior in the delineation of character, and this result is partly due to the intermingling of the comic with the serious elements. The story belongs to the time of Richelieu. King Louis XIII is shown as a pious and melancholy monarch, restive under the masterful control of the great cardinal, yet unable to assert the majesty of his station. The jester, strangely solemn, tries to win his purpose by working on the king's fail-

ings. Marquis de Saverney is a brilliant type of a light-hearted French noble, full of gayety until the time arrives for the revelation of the deeper nobility of his soul. He is the pitiful victim of a woman's wickedness; but, self-possessed to the last, he can point out errors in spelling in his own death-warrant. Marion Delorme is a poetic heroine of the kind since made too familiar on the stage—the frail courtesan who, by the possession of some virtue, is redeemed from her fallen state. Didier, the hero, resembles Hernani, but is more misanthropic, mysterious and a lonely wanderer. Richelieu, though felt to be the moving force of the whole piece, does not appear on the stage; and this is one of the triumphs of the dramatist's art, to make the churchman's power fully recognized through his agents, a feature of the play also true to the part.

Le Roi s'Amuse.

In 1832 Hugo's next play, *Le Roi s'Amuse*, was written and produced on the stage, but it failed on the first night and had no chance of recovery because the government prohibited it as exposing a king to contempt. The critics of the press denounced it as indecent and monstrous. It was never again performed until November, 1882, after a lapse of fifty years, when it was revived in the author's honor.

The story is well known, for it has furnished the plot of Verdi's opera, *Rigoletto*, and has been made over in the English play, *The Fool's Revenge*, by Tom Taylor. Yet it must be noted that the terrible tragedy of the

French original has there been weakened into a simple triumph of virtue.

The French play deals only with the wickedness of royal courts, but contains no passage glossing over immorality or seducing the imagination by making vice attractive. It may be objected that it contains no healthy virtuous character, that all are infected with the plague. Even Blanche, the weak-headed, warm-hearted girl of sixteen too readily yields to the royal seducer, but pays the awful penalty. Francis I, the profligate king, may be drawn in colors too dark by the dramatist, yet the sober historian can hardly deny the substantial likeness. Triboulet, the hunchback jester whom Hugo characterized as physical deformity sanctified by paternal love, is a malignant snarler at mankind, and the strange retributive vengeance which overtakes him at the moment of his fancied triumph is almost felt to be commensurate with his guilt.

This noteworthy play is here given in considerable fullness. It opens with a gay scene of court festivity, amid which King Francis addresses Monsieur de la Tour, a gentleman of his suite.

The King.—I'll ne'er relinquish the adventurous chase
Till it give forth the fruit of so much toil.
Plebeian though she be! of rank obscure,
Her birth unknown, her very name concealed:
What then? These eyes ne'er gazed on one so fair.

La Tour.—And this bright city goodness still you meet
At holy mass?

The K.— At St. Germain des Prés
As sure as Sunday comes.

La T.— Your amorous flame
 Dates two months since. You've tracked the game to
 earth.

The K.—Near Bussy's Terrace, where De Cossé dwells,
 She lives immured.

La T.— I think I know the spot,
 That is, the outside. Not, perchance, so well
 As doth your majesty the heaven within.

The K.—Nay, there you flatter; entrance is denied.
 A bedlam fierce, who keeps eyes, ears and tongue
 Under her guidance, watches over there.

La T.—Indeed!

The K.— And then, Oh mystery most rare!
 As evening falls, a strange unearthly form,
 Whose features night conceals, enshrouded close
 In mantle dark, as for some guilty deed,
 Doth glide within.

La T.— Then do thou likewise.

The K.— Nay.
 The house is barred and isolate from all.

La T.—At least the fair one, with such patience woced,
 Hath shown some signs of life.

The K.— I do confess,
 If glances speak the soul, those witching eyes
 Proclaim no hatred insurmountable.

La T.—Knows she a monarch loves?

The K.— Impossible!
 A homely garb, a student's woolen dress,
 Conceals my quality.

La T.— Oh, virtuous love!
 That burns with such a pure, undying flame
 I warrant me 'tis some sly abbé's mistress.
 (Enter Triboulet and a number of courtiers.)

The K.—Hush! some one comes!
 (Aloud to Triboulet, as he approaches.)
 Silence his lips must seal
 Whose love would prosper!—Have I said aright?

Triboulet.—To shade the fragile vase, glass lends its veil;
Thus flimsy mystery hides love more frail.

In the second scene, among gentlemen superbly dressed, the king turns to admire a group of ladies.

La Tour.—Madame de Vendome looks, to-night, divine.

De Gordes.—Fair D'Albe and Montchevreuil blaze like twin stars.

The King.—Now, in my eyes, De Cossé's charming wife
Outshines all three.

De G.—(Pointing to *De Cossé*.) Hush! hush, your majesty!
Unless you mean this for a husband's ear.

The K..—Why, for that matter, Count, i' faith I care not.

De G..—He'll tell the fair Dian.

The K.—What care I?

(The king retires to speak to the ladies.)

Triboulet.—(To *M. de Gordes*.) The king will anger Dian of Poitiers.

For eight long days he holds not converse with her.

De G..—Will he restore her to her husband's arms?

Trib..—Indeed, I hope not.

De G.—She hath paid in full
A guilty ransom for her father's life.

Trib..—Ah! apropos, now, of St. Vallier.—

"Tis a most strange and singular old man:
How could he think to join in nuptial bond
His daughter Dian, radiant as the light
(An angel sent by Heaven to bless this earth),
With an ill-favored, hunch-backed seneschal?

De G..—'Tis an old fool—a pale and grave old man.

When pardon came, I stood beside the block,—
Aye, nearer much than now I do to thee,—
Yet said he nothing, but "God bless the king!"
And now he's quite distraught!

The K..—(Passing across with *Madame de Cossé*.) Unkind! so soon?

Madame de Cossé.—My husband takes me with him to Soissons.

The K.—Oh! 'tis a sin! Paris forbids thy flight—

• Paris, where wits and courtiers languish all
With melting tenderness and fond desires—
Where duellists and poets ever keep
Their keenest thrusts, their brightest thoughts for thee,
For thee, whose glances, winning every heart,
Warn each fair dame to watch her lover well;
Dazzling our court with such a flood of light.
Thy sun once set, we ne'er shall think 'tis day.
Canst thou abandon kings and emperors,
Dukes, princes, peers, and condescend to shine,
Thou star of town! in a vile country heaven?

Mad. de C.—Be calm.

The K.— As though some sacrilegious hand
Amidst the brightest splendor of the dance
Had from the ball-room torn the chandelier.

Mad. de C.—My jealous lord!

(She points to her husband approaching and runs away.)

The K.— The devil claim his soul!
(Turning to Triboulet.)

But I have penned a sonnet to his wife.
Has Marot shown thee those last rhymes of mine?

Trib.—I never read your verses,—royal strains
Are always vile.

The K.— Oh, bravo!

Trib.— Let the herd
Rhyme love with dove—'tis their vocation thus;
Monarchs, with beauty, take a different course;
Make love, O sire, and let Marot make verse—
It but degrades a king.

The K.—(Seeing Madame de Coslin, to whom he turns, but says to Triboulet.) I'd have thee whipped
If fair de Coslin did not tempt me hence.

Trib.—(Aside.) Another still! Oh, fickle as the wind
That blows thee to her.

De G.—(Approaching Triboulet.) By the other door
 Madame de Cossé comes! I pledge my faith
 She drops some token, that the amorous king
 May turn to raise it.

Trib.— Let's observe awhile.

(Madame de Cossé drops her bouquet.)

De G.—I said so!

Trib.— Excellent!

(The king leaves Madame de Coslin, picks up the bouquet and presents it to Madame de Cossé, with whom he enters into a lively conversation, apparently of a tender nature.)

De G.— The bird's resnared!

Trib.—Woman's a devil of most rare perfection!

(The king whispers to Madame de Cossé; she laughs. Suddenly M. de Cossé draws near, coming from the back of the stage. De Gordes remarks it to Triboulet.)

De G.—Her husband!

(Madame de Cossé, seeing her husband, disengages herself from the king and runs off.)

Mad. de C.— Leave me!

Trib.— What a jealous fright

Shakes his fat side, and wrinkles o'er his brow.

(The king, who has been helped to wine, comes forward.)

The K.—Oh, happy hours! Why, Jupiter himself,
 And Hercules, were two poor, senseless fools
 Compared to me! 'Tis woman gilds this earth.
 I am all happiness!—and thou? (To Triboulet.)

Trib.— All joy!

I laugh at balls, pomps, follies, guilty loves;
 And sneer while you enjoy. Yet both are blest;
 You as a king, and as a hunchback I.

The K.—De Cossé damps the fête; but let that pass.

How does he look now, think you?

(Pointing to De Cossé, who is leaving the palace.)

Trib.— Like an ass!

The K.—Naught plagues me save this corpulent old Count;
 Mine is the power to do,—to wish!—to have!
 Oh, Triboulet, what pleasure 'tis to live!—
 The world's so happy!

Trib.—(Aside.) And the king is drunk.

The K.—Ah, there again! What arms!—what lips!—what eyes!

Trib.—Madame de Cossé?

The K.— Take thou charge of me. (Sings.)

“Paris, bright and gay,
 Nowhere is thy fellow——
 All thy girls are ripe——”

Trib.—(Sings.) “And all thy men are mellow.”

In the following scene we have a fair specimen of Hugo's idea of humor:

Triboulet.—Scholars at court! Monstrosity most rare!

The King.—Go, preach unto my sister of Navarre,
 She'd set me round with pedants!

Trib.— Sire, at least
 You'll own I've drunk somewhat less than you,
 And therefore crave I to decide this matter
 In all its points, shapes, hues and qualities.
 I've one advantage, nay, I'll reckon two.
 First, I am sober, next, I'm not a king.
 Rather than summon scholars to the court,
 Bring plague and famine!

The K.— Yet my sister strives
 To fill my court with scholars.

Trib.— Most unkind
 Upon a sister's part.—Believe me, Sire,
 There's not in nature's strange menagerie,
 Nor hungry wolf, nor crow, nor fox, nor dog,
 Nor famished poet, heretic nor Turk,
 Nor hideous owl, nor bear, nor creeping sloth
 One half so hungry, hideous, filthy, foul,
 Puffed with conceits and strange absurdities,

As that same animal, yclept a scholar.
 Have you not pleasures, conquests, boundless power,
 And (shedding light and perfume over all)
 Enchanting woman?

The K.— Marguerite avers
 That woman's love may tempt me not for long,
 And when it palls—

Trib.— Oh, medicine most strange!
 Prescribe a pedant for a heart that's cloyed.
 The Lady Marguerite, 'tis widely known,
 Was ever famed for desperate remedies.

The K.—I'll have no scholars,—poets might be borne.

Trib.—Now, were I king, I'd loathe a poet more
 Than Beelzebub doth sign of holy cross.

The K.—But some half dozen!

Trib.— 'Tis a stable full,—
 A whole menagerie. We've quite enough
 Of Marot here, without being poison'd quite
 With flimsy rhymesters.

Marot.— Thank you, good buffoon,
 (Aside.) The fool were wiser had he held his tongue.

Trib.—Be beauty still your heaven; 'tis the sun
 Whose smiles illume earth. Ne'er clog your brain
 With books.

The K.— Nay, by the faith, now, of a gentleman,
 For books care I as much as fish for apples.
 (Shouts of laughter are heard from a group of
 courtiers behind.)

Methinks, good fool, they're merry at thy cost.

Trib.—(Draws near to the group, listens and returns.) Another
 fool they laugh at!

The K.— Aye! whom, then?

Trib.—The king!

The K.— At me?

Trib.— Yes, Sire, they call you mean:
 Say gold and honors fly into Navarre,
 While they get nothing.

The K.— Now, I note them well!
Montmorency, Brion and Montchenû.

Trib.—Exactly so.

The K.— Ungrateful, selfish hounds!
One I made admiral,—constable the next,
And Montchenû my master of the horse;—
Yet they complain!

Trib.— Why, 'tis not quite enough;
They still deserve something at your hands:—
Best do it quickly, Sire.

The K.— Do what?

Trib.— Hang up all three.

Montmorency.—He smarts for this.

In the last scene of the first act, which, as usual on the French stage, is only marked by the entrance of new personages, St. Vallier, an old man in deep mourning, with white hair and beard, bursts through the crowd at the back of the stage, and confronts the king, gazing steadily upon him.

St. Vallier.— I will be heard!
Who dare restrain me?

The King.—(Appalled.) Monsieur St. Vallier!

St. Val.—'Tis thus I'm named!
(The king advances angrily toward him, but is stopped by Triboulet.)

Triboulet.— Permit me, Sire, to speak.
I will so bravely lecture this good man!
(Puts himself in a theatrical attitude and addresses St. Vallier.)

Sir! you once stirred rebellion 'gainst our throne;
We pardoned, as kind monarchs should; yet now
A stranger, wilder madness takes your mind,—

You seek for offspring from a son-in-law
 As hideous as the vilest dwarf e'er known,
 Ill-shaped, ill-bred, pale, ghastly and deformed,
 An odious wart upon his monstrous nose.

A shape like that! (Pointing to De Cossé.)

An ugly hump like mine!

Who sees your daughter near him, needs must laugh.
 (Unless our king had interfered), he might
 Have made rare specimens of grandsons for you,
 Diseased, unseemly, rickety, misshaped,
 Swoll'n like that gentleman,

(Pointing to De Cossé, who writhes with anger.)

Or humped like me.

Bah! he's too ugly;—now, our noble king
 Will give you grandsons that may be your pride,
 To climb your knee and pluck your reverend beard!

(The courtiers laugh and applaud Triboulet.)

St. Val.—'Tis but one insult more;—now hear me, Sire,

A king should listen when his subjects speak:
 'Tis true, your mandate led me to the block,
 Where pardon came upon me, like a dream;
 I blessed you then, unconscious as I was
 That a king's mercy, sharper far than death,
 To save a father doomed his child to shame;
 Yes, without pity for the noble race
 Of Poitiers, spotless for a thousand years,
 You, Francis of Valois, without one spark
 Of love or pity, honor or remorse,
 Did on that night (thy couch her virtue's tomo),
 With cold embraces, foully bring to scorn
 My helpless daughter, Dian of Poitiers.

To save her father's life, a knight she sought,
 Like Bayard, fearless and without reproach.
 She found a heartless king, who sold the boon,
 Making cold bargain for his child's dishonor.
 Oh! monstrous traffic! foully hast thou done!
 My blood was thine, and justly, tho' it springs
 Among the best and noblest names of France;
 But to pretend to spare these poor gray locks,

And yet to trample on a weeping woman,
 Was basely done; the father was thine own,
 But not the daughter!—thou hast overpassed
 The right of monarchs!—yet, 'tis mercy deemed,
 And I, perchance, am called ungrateful still.
 Oh, hadst thou come within my dungeon walls,
 I would have sued upon my knees for death,
 But mercy for my child, my name, my race;
 Which, once polluted, is my race no more;
 Rather than insult, death to them and me.
 I come not now to ask her back from thee;
 Nay, let her love thee with insensate love;
 I take back naught that bears the brand of shame.
 Keep her!—Yet still amidst thy festivals,
 Until some father's, brother's, husband's hand
 ('Twill come to pass) shall rid us of thy yoke,
 My pallid face shall ever haunt thee there,
 To tell thee, Francis, it was foully done!
 And thou shalt listen, and thy guilty pride
 Shall shrink abashed before me; would you now
 Command the headsman's axe to do its office,
 You dare not, lest my spectre should return
 To tell thee—

The K.—Madness! (To De Pienne.) Duke! arrest the traitor.

Trib.—(Sneering at St. Vallier.) The poor man raves.

St. Val.—

Accursed be ye both!

Oh, Sire! 'tis wrong upon the dying lion
 To loose thy dog! (Turns to Triboulet.)

And thou, whoe'er thou art,
 That with a fiendish sneer and viper's tongue,
 Makest my tears a pastime and a sport,
 My curse upon thee!—Sire, thy brow doth bear
 The gems of France!—on mine, old age doth sit;
 Thine decked with jewels, mine with these gray hairs;
 We both are kings, yet bear a different crown;
 And should some impious hand upon thy head
 Heap wrongs and insults, with thine own strong arm
 Thou canst avenge them!—God avenges mine!

(*St. Vallier is led off.*)

The following pathetic scene, between Triboulet and his daughter Blanche, occurs in Triboulet's house:

Triboulet.—My child! (He presses her to his bosom with delight.) Ah, place your arms around my neck; Come to my heart, my child! I'm happy now; Near thee all's joy! I live, I breathe again.

(He gazes at her with transport.) More beauteous every day. Blanche, art thou well?—Quite well? Dear Blanche! come kiss me once again.

Blanche.—You are so kind, dear father.

Trib.— No, indeed,
I do but love thee. Thou'rt my life, my blood.
Blanche, if I lost thee!—oh, the thought is death.

Blan.—(Putting her hand on his forehead.) What makes you sigh so heavily, my father?

Tell me your sorrows; trust your grief with me.
Have we no kindred? Where are all our friends?

Trib.—Daughter, thou hast none.

Blan.— Tell me then your name.

Trib.—Why would'st thou know it?

Blan.— When at dear Chinon,
The little village where I lived before,
The neighbors called me orphan, till you came.

Trib.—'Twere far more prudent to have left thee there;
But I could bear my sad, sad life no longer;
I yearned for thee—I wanted one to love me.

Blan.—Well, if you will not tell me of yourself—

Trib.—(Not listening to her.) You go not out?

Blan.— Two months have I been here,
And but eight times to mass gone forth.

Trib.— 'Tis well.

Blan.—At least you'll tell me of my mother now?

Trib.—No, no. Forbear to wake that chord, my child.
Let me not think upon how much I've lost;
Wert thou not here I'd deem it all a dream:
A woman different from all womankind,

Who knew me poor, deserted, sick, deformed,
 Yet loved me, even for my wretchedness.
 Dying, she carried to the silent tomb
 The blessed secret of her sainted love:
 Love, fleeter, brighter than the lightning's flash;
 A ray from paradise illumining hell.
 Oh, earth, press lightly on that angel breast,
 Where only did my sorrow find repose.
 But thou art here, my child. O God, I thank thee!
(He bursts into tears.)

Blan.—Oh, how you weep! indeed I cannot bear
 To see you thus—it makes me wretched, too.

Trib.—Wouldst have me laugh?

Blan.—Dear father, pardon me.
 Tell me your name—confide your grief in me.

Trib.—I am thy father. Ask me not for more;
 In this great world some hate me—some despise;
 But here at least, where all is innocence,
 I am thy father—loved, revered. No name
 Is holier than a father's to his child.

Blan.—Dear father!

Trib.—(Again embracing her.) Ah, what heart responds like
 thine?
 I love thee, as I hate all else beside.
 Sit thee down by me. Come, we'll talk of this.
 Art sure thou lov'st me? Now that we are here
 Together, and thy hand is clasped in mine,
 Why should we speak of anything but thee?
 The only joy that Heaven vouchsafes, my child!
 Others have parents, brothers, loving friends,
 Wives, husbands, vassals, a long pedigree
 Of ancestors, and children numerous—
 But I have only thee! Some men are rich,
 Thou art my only treasure, Blanche! my all.
 Some trust in heaven: I trust alone in thee.
 What care I now for youth, or woman's love,
 For pomp or grandeur, dignities or wealth?
 These are brave things, but thou outweigh'st them all;
 Thou art my country, city, family—

My riches, happiness, religion, hope—
 My universe; I find them all in thee.
 From all but thee my soul shrinks, trembling, back.
 Oh, if I lost thee! The distracting thought
 Would kill me, if it lived one instant more!
 Smile on me, Blanche! thy pretty, artless smile,
 So like thy mother's; she was artless too.—
 You press your hand upon your brow, my child,
 Just as she did. My soul leaps forth to thine,
 Even in darkness—I can see thee still—
 For thou art day, and light, and life to me.

Blan.—Would I could make you happy!

Trib.— Happy! Blanche!

I am so happy when I gaze on thee—
 My very heart seems bursting with delight.
 (Passes his hand through her hair and smiles.)
 What fine dark hair! I recollect it once
 So very light! Who would believe it now?

Blan.—Some day, before the curfew bell has tolled,
 You'll let me take a walk, and see the town?

Trib.—Oh, never, never! Thou hast not left home
 Unless with Dame Berarde?

Blan.— Oh, no!

Trib.— Beware!

Blan.—Forth but to church I go!

Trib.—(Aside.) She may be seen,
 Perhaps pursued, torn from me, and disgraced.
 Hah! were it so! the wretched jester's daughter
 There's none would pity. (Aloud.) I beseech thee,
 Blanche,
 Stir not abroad.—Thou know'st not how impure,
 How poisonous is the Paris air to woman:
 How heartless profligates infest the streets,
 And courtiers baser still! (Aside.) Oh, Heaven, protect,
 Watch o'er, preserve her from the damning snares
 And touch impure of libertines, whose breath
 Hath blighted flowers pure and fair as she.
 Let e'en her dreams be holy!—Here at least

Her hapless father, resting from his woes,
Shall breathe, with grateful heart, the sweet perfume
Of this fair rose of innocence and love!

(He buries his face in his hands and bursts into tears.)

Blan.—I'll think no more of going out, dear father,
But do not weep.

Trib.— These tears relieve me, child.
So much I laughed last night:—but I forget,
The hour to bear my hated yoke draws nigh.
Dear Blanche, adieu!

In the third act Blanche has been carried off to the royal antechamber at the Louvre.

(The king, when left alone with Blanche, takes the veil from her face.)

The King.—Blanche!

Blanche.—Godfrey Melune! Oh, Heav'n!

The K.—(Bursting into a fit of laughter.) Now, by my faith!

Whether 'tis chance or planned, the game is mine.
My Blanche, my beautiful, my heart's delight,
Come to my arms!

Blan.—(Rising and shrinking back.) The king! forgive me, sire;

Indeed, I know not what to say.—Good sir,
Godfrey Melune;—But no! you are the king.

(She falls on her knees again.)

Whoe'er thou art, alas! have mercy on me!

The K.—Mercy on thee! my Blanche, whom I adore!

Francis confirms the love that Godfrey gave.
I love, thou lovest, and we both are blest.
The name of king dims not the lover's flame.
You deemed me, once, a scholar, clerk,
Lowly in rank, in all but learning poor;
And now that chance hath made me nobler born,
And crowned me king, is that sufficient cause

To hold me suddenly in such abhorrence?
I've not the luck to be a serf—what then?

(The king laughs heartily.)

Blan.—Oh, how he laughs!—and I with shame could die!

The K.—What fêtes, what sports and pageants, shall be ours?

What whispered love in garden and in grove!
A thousand pleasures that the night conceals!
Thy happy future grafted on mine own—
We'll be two lovers wedded in delight.
Age must steal on, and what is human life?
A paltry stuff, of mingled toil and care,
Which love with starry light doth spangle o'er;
Without it, trust me, 'tis a sorry rag—
Blanche, 'tis a theme I've oft reflected on,
And this is wisdom:—honor Heaven above,
Eat, drink, be merry, crowning all with love!

Blan.—(Confounded and shuddering.) Oh, how unlike the picture fancy drew!

The K.—What did you think me, then, a solemn fool,
A trembling lover, spiritless and tame,
Who thinks all women ready to expire
With melting sympathy, because he sighs
And wears a sad and melancholy face?

Blan.—Oh, leave me! (Aside.) Wretched girl!

The K.— Know'st who I am?—
Why, France—a nation—fifteen million souls—
Gold, honor, pleasures, power uncurbed by law,
All, all are mine:—I reign and rule o'er all.
I am their sovereign, Blanche, but thou art mine—
I am their king, Blanche, wilt not be my queen?

Blan.—The queen! Your wife!

The K.—(Laughing heartily.) No! virtuous innocence;
The queen, my mistress: 'tis the fairer name.

Blan.—Thy mistress! Shame upon thee!

The K.— Hah! so proud?

Blan.—(Indignantly.) I'll ne'er be such! My father can protect me!

The K.—My poor buffoon! my fool! my Triboulet!
Thy father's mine!—my property! my slave!
His will's mine own!

Blan.—(Weeping.) Is he, too, yours? (She sobs out.)
The K.—(Falling on his knees.) Dear Blanche! too dear to me!
Oh, weep not thus! but, pressed against my heart—
(He endeavors to embrace her.)

Blan.—Forbear!

The K.— Say but again thou lov'st me, Blanche!
Blan.—No! no!—'tis passed.

The K.— I've pained thee thoughtlessly.
Nay, do not sob! Rather than force from thee
Those precious drops, my Blanche, I'd die with shame,
Or pass before my kingdom and my court
For one unknown to gallantry and fame.
A king—and make a woman weep! Ye gods!

Blan.—'Tis all a cheat! I know you jest with me!
If you be king, let me be taken home.
My father weeps for me. I live hard by
De Cossé's palace; but you know it well.
Alas! who are you? I'm bewildered!—lost!
Dragg'd like a victim here 'midst cries of joy;
My brain whirls round. 'Tis but a frightful dream!
You, that I thought so kind. (Weeping.) Alas! I think
I love you not! (Suddenly starting back.) I do but fear
you now!

The K.—(Trying to take her in his arms.) You fear me,
Blanche!

Blan.—(Resisting.) Have pity!

The K.—(Seizing her in his arms.) Well, at least
One pardoning kiss!

Blan.—(Struggling.) No! no!

The K.—(Laughing and aside.) How strange a girl!

Blan.—(Forcing herself away.) Help! Ah! that door!
(She sees the door of the king's own room,
rushes in, and closes it violently.)

The K.—(Taking out a little key from his girdle.) 'Tis lucky
I've the key!

(He opens the door, rushes in, and locks it behind
him.)

Marot.—(Who has been watching for some time at the door at
the back of the stage.) She flies for safety to the
king's own chamber!

Alas! poor lamb!

In the following scene Triboulet appears, crying
“Give me back my child!”

Courtiers.—(Appalled.) His child!

Triboulet.—My daughter! Do you taunt me now?

Why, wolves and courtiers have their offspring too,
And why not I? Enough of this, my lords;
If 'twere a jest, 'tis ended now! You laugh,—
You whisper! Villains! 'twas a heartless deed.
I'll tear her from you. Give me back my child!
She's there!

(He rushes to the door of the king's room. All the
courtiers interpose and prevent him.)

Mar.— His folly has to madness turned.

Trib.—Base courtiers! demons! fawning race accurst!

A maiden's honor is to you as naught—
A king's fit prey—a profligate's debauch.
Your wives and daughters (if they chance to please)
Belong to him. The virgin's sacred name
Is deemed a treasure burthensome to bear:
A woman's but a field—a yielding farm
Let out to royalty. The rent it brings,
A government, a title, ribbon, star!
Not one amongst ye gives me back the lie.
. What names are these
Who basely steal away a poor man's child?
O never from such a high and ancient race,
Such blazons proud, sprung dastards such as ye,
But from some favored lackey's stolen embrace:
You're bastards all!

De Gordes.—

Bravo, buffoon!

Trib.—

How much

Has the king given for this honored service?

You're paid—I know it. (Tears his hair.) I, who had
but her—

What can the king for me! He cannot give
A name like yours, to hide me from mine own:
Nor shape my limbs, nor make my looks more smooth.
Hell! he has taken all! I'll ne'er go hence
Till she's restored! Look at this trembling hand—
'Tis but a serf's! no blood illustrious there;—
Unarmed, you think, because no sword it bears,—
But with my nails I'll tear her from ye all!

(He rushes again at the door; all the courtiers
close upon him; he struggles desperately for
some time, but at length, exhausted, falls on
his knees at the front of the stage.)

All, all combined against me! ten to one!

(Turning to Marot.)

Behold these tears, Marot! Be merciful;
Thine is a soul inspired. Oh, have a heart!
Tell me she's here! Ours is a common cause,
For thou alone, amidst this lordly throng,
Hast wit and sense. Marot!—Oh, good Marot!

(Turns to the courtiers.)

Even at your feet, my lords, I sue for grace;
I'm sick at heart; alas, be merciful!
Some other day I'll bear your humors better;
For many a year your poor misshapen buffoon
Has made you sport—aye, when his heart would break.
Forgive your Triboulet, nor vent your spleen
On one so helpless; give me back my child—
My only treasure—all that I possess!
Without her, nothing in this world is mine.
Be kind to me! another night like this
Would sear my brain and whiten o'er my hair.

(The door of the king's room opens, and Blanche,
agitated and distraught, rushes out, and, with
a cry of terror, throws herself into her father's
arms.)

Blan.—My father, ah! (She buries her head in her father's bosom.)

Trib.—My Blanche! my only child!

Look ye, good sirs, the last of all my race.

Dear angel!—Gentlemen, you'll bear with me—

You'll pardon, I am sure, these tears of joy.

A child like this, whose gentle innocence

Even to look on makes the heart more pure,

Could not be lost, you'll own, without a pang. (To Blanche.)

Fear nothing now; 'twas but a thoughtless jest,

Something to laugh at.—How they frightened thee!

Confess it, Blanche. (Embraces her fondly.) But I'm so happy now,

My heart's so full, I never knew before

How much I loved. I laugh, that once did weep

To lose thee; yet to hold thus again

Is surely bliss.—But thou dost weep, my child?

Blan.—(Covering her face with her hand.) Oh, hide me from my shame!

Trib.—(Starting.) What mean'st thou, Blanche?

Blan.—(Pointing to the courtiers.) Not before these; I'd blush and speak alone.

Trib.—(Turning in an agony to the king's door.) Monster!—She, too!

Blan.—(Sobbing and falling at his feet.) Alone with thee, my father!

Trib.—(Striding toward the courtiers.) Go, get ye hence! And if the king pretend

To turn his steps this way, (To Vermandois.)

You're of his guard!

Tell him he dare not!—Triboulet is here!

De Pienne.—Of all the fools, no fool e'er equalled this.

De Gordes.—To fools and children sometimes must we yield,
Yet will we watch without.

(Exeunt all the courtiers but De Cossé.)

Trib.—Speak freely to me, Blanche.

(He turns and, seeing De Cossé, exclaims in a voice of thunder.)

You heard me, sir?

De Cossé.—(Retiring precipitately.) These fools permit themselves strange liberties.

In the following scene Blanche and Triboulet are alone:

Triboulet.—(Gravely and sternly.) Now speak!

Blanche.—(With downcast eyes, interrupted by sobs.) Dear father, 'twas but yesternight

He stole within the gate—— (She hides her face.)

I cannot speak.

(Triboulet presses her in his arms and kisses her forehead tenderly.)

But long ago (I should have told you then)

He followed me, yet spoke not, and at church,

As sure as Sunday came, this gentleman——

Trib.—(Fiercely.) The king!

Blan.— Passed close to me, and, as I think,

Disturbed my chair, that I might look on him.

Last night he gained admittance.

Trib.—

Stop, my child;

I'll spare thy shame the pang of telling it;

I guess the rest. (He stands erect.)

Oh, sorrow, most complete!

His loathsome touch has withered on thy brow

The virgin wreath of purity it wore,

And in its stead has left the brand of shame!

The once pure air that did environ thee

His breath has sullied. Oh, my Blanche! my child!

Once the sole refuge of my misery,

The day that woke me from a night of woe,

The soul through which mine own had hopes of heaven,

A veil of radiance, covering my disgrace.

The haven still for one by all accurst,

An angel left by God to bless my tears,
 The only sainted thing I e'er did trust!
 What am I now? Amidst this hollow court,
 Where vice and infamy and foul debauch,
 With riot wild and bold effrontery reign;
 These eyes, aweary with the sight of crime,
 Turned to thy guiltless soul to find repose;
 Then could I bear my fate, my abject fate,
 My tears, that pride that swelled my bursting heart,
 The witty sneers that sharpened on my woes—
 Yes, all the pangs of sorrow and of shame
 I could endure, but not thy wrongs, my child!
 Aye, hide thy face and weep; at thy young age
 Some part of anguish may escape in tears;
 Pour what thou canst into a father's heart.
 But now, enough. The matter once dispatched,
 We leave this city,—aye, if I escape!

(Turning with redoubled rage to the king's chamber.)
 Francis the First! may God, who hears my prayer,
 Dig in thy path a bloody sepulchre,
 And hurl thee down, unshrined, and gorged with sin.

Blan.—(Aside.) Grant it not, Heaven! for I love him still.

Triboulet has sworn to kill the king, and to convince his daughter, takes her to a spot where, through an aperture in the wall, she sees the king making love to Maguelonne, sister of the bravo, Saltabadil.

The King.—(Striking Saltabadil familiarly on the shoulder.)
 Two things at once—your sister and a glass!

Triboulet.—(Aside.) The morals of a king by grace design
 Who risks his life in low debaucheries,
 And doth prefer the wine that damns his sense,
 If proffered by some tavern Hebe's hand!

The K.—(Sings.) Changeful woman, constant never,
 He's a fool who trusts her ever,
 For her love the wind doth blow,
 Like a feather, to and fro.

At a signal from Saltabadil a young girl bounds quickly down the stairs in gypsy dress. As she enters, the king tries to seize her in his arms, but she slips away. At a hint from Francis, Saltabadil comes forth from the door. Blanche sees only the young girl dancing around the king.

Saltabadil.—(In a low voice, to Triboulet.) Shall he die now?

Triboulet.—Not yet! return anon.

(Saltabadil disappears behind the parapet wall.

Meanwhile the king tries to caress the young
gypsy.)

Maguelonne.—(Slipping away.) No, no!

The King.—Thou offerest too much defense.

A truce! Come hither! (The girl draws nearer.) 'Tis a
week ago,

At Triancourt's hotel (ah, let me see,
Who took me there?—I think 'twas Triboulet),
There first I gazed upon that beauteous face.
'Tis just a week, my goddess, that I love thee,
And thee alone.

Mag.—And twenty more besides;

To me a most accomplished rake you seem.

The K.—Well, well! I own some hearts have ached for me.

True, I'm a monster.

Mag.—Coxcomb!

The K.—'Tis most true!

But, tempter, 'twas your beauty lured me here,
With most adventurous patience to endure
A dinner of the vilest;—and such wine!
Your brother's hang-dog looks have soured it:
An ugly wretch! How dares he show his face
So near those witching eyes and lips of bliss!
It matters not. I stir not hence to-night.

Mag.—(Aside.) He courts the snare. (To the king, who tries
to embrace her.) Excuse me!

The K.—Why resist?

Mag.—Be wise!

The K.—Why, this is wisdom, Maguelonne.

Eat, drink and love; I hold exactly there
With old King Solomon.

Mag.—(Laughing.)

Ha! ha! I think
Thou lov'st the tavern better than the church.

After some further coquetry the king clasps Maguelonne round the waist, and whispers in her ear. Blanche, unable to bear the scene any longer, turns away and totters toward her father.

Triboulet.—(After gazing on her for some time in silence.)
What think'st thou now of vengeance, my poor child?

Blanche.—Betrayed! ungrateful! Oh, my heart will break!

He hath no soul, no pity, kindness—none!
Even to that girl, who loves him not, he says
The same fond words that once he said to me.

(Hides her head in her father's bosom.)
And oh, that shameless creature!

Trib.— Hush! no more!
Enough of tears; leave now revenge to me.

Blan.—Do as thou wilt.

Trib.— I thank thee.

Blan.— Yet, alas!
Father, I tremble when I read thy looks.
What would'st thou do?

Trib.— I pray thee, ask me not.
All is prepared. Now to our house, my child;
There quick disguise thee as a cavalier,
Mount a swift steed, and store thy purse with gold;—
Hie thee to Evreux, stop not on the road,
And by to-morrow's eve I'll join thee there.
Beneath thy mother's portrait stands a chest—
Thou know'st it well—the dress lies ready there.

The horse stands saddled. Do as I have said,
But come not here again; for here shall pass
A deed most terrible. Go now, dear Blanche!

Saltabadil agrees to assassinate the king and deliver his body to Triboulet sewn in a sack, for which the buffoon is to pay him twenty crowns. Saltabadil shows Francis his room, which Maguelonne is to share. A storm is raging, and Blanche appears at the back of the stage, dressed as a cavalier. She advances slowly to a crevice in the wall, where she hears and sees all that is going on. Meanwhile Saltabadil drinks the wine that the king has left, and Maguelonne, with a lamp in her hand, bends over the sleeping king. She tries to save him, and after a long argument her brother agrees to a compromise:

Saltabdil.—If any stranger chance to pass this way,
And claim our shelter, ere the bell shall toll,
I'll strike him dead,—and offer, in exchange,
His mangled body for thy puppet yonder.
So that the corse be thrown into the Seine,
He cannot guess the change.

But Blanche resolves to give her life for that of the king, whom she still loves, and just on the stroke of midnight, the hour appointed for the murder, knocks at the door and asks for a night's repose. As she passes the threshold Saltabadil stabs her to the heart. In the fifth act, as in the fourth, the scene represents the house of the assassin. It is completely closed and in darkness. Triboulet comes slowly forward, enveloped with his

mantle. The storm has somewhat diminished in violence. The rain has ceased; but with occasional flashes of lightning, distant thunder is heard.

Triboulet.—Now is the triumph mine! The blow is struck
That pays a lingering month of agony.
'Midst sneers and ribald jests, the poor buffoon
Shed tears of blood beneath his mask of smiles.
(Examines the door of the house.)
This is the door—Oh, vengeance exquisite!—
Thro' which the curse of him I hate shall pass.
The hour has not yet tolled; yet am I here
To gaze upon thy tomb! Mysterious night! (Thunder.)
In heaven a tempest; murder upon earth!
Now I am great, indeed. My just revenge
Joins with the wrath of God. I've slain the king!
And such a king!—upon whose breath depends
The throne of twenty monarchs; and whose voice
Declares to trembling millions peace or war!
He wields the destinies of half mankind,
And falling thus, the world shall sink with him.
'Tis I that strike this mighty Atlas down!
Through me all Europe shall his loss bewail.
Affrighted earth, e'en from its utmost bounds,
Shall shriek! Thy arm hath done this, Triboulet.
Triumph, buffoon!—exult thee in thy pride;
A fool's revenge the globe itself doth shake!

(The storm continues. A distant clock strikes twelve.)

The hour! (He runs to the door and knocks loudly.)

Voice.—(From within.) Who knocks?

Trib.—

'Tis I! admit me! haste!

Voice.—(Within.) All's well; but enter not!

(The lower half of the door is opened, and Saltabadil crawls out, dragging after him an oblong-shaped mass, scarcely distinguishable in the darkness of the night.)

Saltabadil.—

How dull a load.

Lend me your aid awhile; within this sack
Your man lies dead!

Trib.— I'll look upon his face.
Bring me a torch!

Salt.— By all the saints, not I.

Trib.—What, canst thou stab, yet fear to look on death?

Salt.—The guard I fear!—the archers of the night;
You'll have no light from me. My task is done.
The gold! .

(*Triboulet* gives it to him, then turns to gaze on
the dead body.)

Trib.— 'Tis there! (Aside.) So hatred hath its joys!

Salt.—Shall I not help you to the river's side?

Trib.—Alone I'll do it.

Salt.— Lighter 'twere for both.

Trib.—'Tis a sweet load; to me 'tis light ,indeed!

Salt.—Well, as you will; but cast it not from hence.

(Pointing to another part of the wall.)

The stream runs deepest there. Be quick. Good-night.

(He reénters the house, closing the door after him.)

Trib.—(Alone, his eyes fixed on the body.) There lies he!
dead! Would I could see him now.

(He examines the sack.)

It matters not, 'tis he!—his spurs peep forth.

Yes! yes! 'tis he!

(He rises up and places his foot on the body.)

Now, giddy world, look on!

Here see the jester! There, the king of kings,
Monarch o'er all, unrivalled, lord supreme!
Beneath my feet I spurn him as he lies,
The Seine his sepulchre, this sack his shroud.
Who hath done this? 'Tis I—and I alone,
Stupendous victory! When morning dawns
The slavish throng will scarce believe the tale,
But future ages, nations yet unborn,
Shall own, and shudder at, the mighty deed.
What, Francis of Valois, thou soul of fire,
Great Charles' greater rival, king of France,
And god of battles! at whose conquering step

The very battlements have quaked for fear!
Hero of Marignan, whose arm o'erthrew
Legions of soldiers, scattered like the dust
Before the impetuous wind! whose actions beamed
Like stars o'ershining all the universe,
Art thou no more?—unshrived, unwept, unknown,
Struck down at once! In all thy power and pride,
From all thy pomps, thy vanities, thy lusts,
Dragged off and hidden like a babe malformed;
Dissolved, extinguished, melted into air;
Appeared and vanished like the lightning's flash,
Perhaps to-morrow,—haggard! trembling! pale!
And prodigal of gold—thro' every street
Criers shall shout, to wond'ring passers-by,
Francis the First—Francis the First is lost!
'Tis strange! (After a short silence.) But thou, my
poor, long-suffering child,
Thou hast thy vengeance. What a thirst was mine
That craved for blood! Gold gave the draught! 'Tis
quench'd!

(He bends over the body in a fit of ungovernable
rage.)

Perfidious monster! Oh, that thou couldst hear!
My child, more precious than a monarch's crown,
My child, who never injured aught that breathed,
Who foully robbed me of, and gave her back
Disgraced and shamed; but now the triumph's mine.
With well-dissembled art I lured thee on,
And bade thy caution sleep, as if the woe
That breaks a father's heart could e'er forgive!
'Twas a hard strife, the weak against the strong:
The weak hath conquered! He who kissed thy foot
Hath gnawed thy heartstrings. Dost thou hear me now,
Thou king of gentlemen! The wretched slave.
The fool, buffoon, scarce worth the name of man—
He whom thou calledst dog—now gives the blow!

(He strikes the dead body.)

'Tis vengeance speaks, and at its voice the soul,
How base soe'er, bursts from its thralling sleep.
The vilest are ennobled, changed, transformed:

Then from its scabbard, like a glittering sword,
 The poor oppressed one draws his hatred forth,
 The stealthy cat's a tiger, and the fool
 Becomes the executioner of kings.
 Would he could feel how bitterly I hate!
 But 'tis enough. Go seek thou in the Seine
 Some royal current that against the stream
 May bear thy mangled corse to Saint Denis.
 Accursed Francis!

(He takes the sack by one end, and drags it to the edge of the wall; as he is about to place it on the parapet, Maguelonne comes out, looks round anxiously, and returns with the king, to whom she makes signs that he may now escape unseen. At the moment that Triboulet is about to throw the body into the Seine, the king leaves the stage in the opposite direction, singing carelessly:)

The King.—Changeful woman!—constant never!
 He's a fool who trusts her ever!

Triboulet.—(Dropping the body on the stage.) Hah! what voice was that?

Some spectre of the night is mocking me!

(He turns round, and listens in a state of great agitation. The voice of the king is again heard in the distance:)

The K.—For her love the wind doth blow
 Like a feather to and fro.

Trib.—Now, by the curse of hell! This is not he!
 Some one hath saved him!—robbed me of my prey!—
 Betrayed! betrayed!

(Runs to the house, but only the upper window is open.)

Assassins!—'Tis too high!

What hapless victim has supplied his place—

What guiltless life?—I shudder! (Feels the body.)

'Tis a corpse!

But who hath perished? 'Tis in vain to seek
 From this abode of hell—a torch to break

The pitchy darkness of this fearful night!
I'll wait the lightning's glare!

(He waits some moments, his eyes fixed on the half-opened sack, from which he has partly drawn forth the body of Blanche. A flash of lightning. Triboulet starts up with a frenzied scream.)

Oh, God! My child!
Hah, what is this? My hands are wet with blood—
My daughter! Oh, my brain!—Some hideous dream
Hath seized my senses! 'Tis impossible!
But now she left me! Heaven be kind to me!
'Tis but a maddening vision—'tis not she!

(Another flash of lightning.)

It is my child—my daughter! Dearest Blanche!
These fiends have murdered thee! Oh, speak, my child!
Speak to thy father! Is there none to help?
Speak to me, Blanche! My child! My child! Oh, God!

(He sinks down exhausted.)

Blanche.—(Half-dying, but rallying at the cries of her father; in a faint voice.) Who calls on me?

Trib.—(In an ecstasy of joy.) She speaks! She grasps my hand!

Her heart beats yet! All-gracious Heaven, she lives!

(She raises herself to a sitting position. Her coat has been taken off, her skirt is covered with blood, her hair hangs loose; the rest of her body is concealed.)

Blan.—Where am I?

Trib.— Dearest, sole delight on earth,
Hear'st thou my voice? Thou know'st me now?

Blan.—My father!

Trib.—Who hath done this? What dreadful mystery!
I dare not touch, lest I should pain thee, Blanche.
I cannot see, but gently guide my hand.
Where art thou hurt?

Blan.—(Gasping for breath.) The knife — has reached — my heart.

I felt—it pierce me.

Trib.— Who has struck the blow?

Blan.—The fault's my own, for I deceived thee, father!
I loved too well! And 'tis for him—I die.

Trib.—Oh, retribution dire!—the dark revenge
I plotted for another falls on me!
But how?—what hand?—Blanche, if thou can't, explain!

Blan.—Oh, ask me not to speak!

Trib.—(Covering her with kisses.) Forgive me, Blanche!
And yet to lose thee thus!

Blan.— I cannot breathe!
Turn me this way!—Some air!

Trib.— Blanche, Blanche! my child!
Oh, do not die. (Turns round in despair.)
Help, help! Will no one come?
Will no one help my child? The ferry bell
Hangs close against the wall. An instant now
I'll leave thee, but to call assistance here,
And bring thee water.

(Blanche makes signs that it is useless.)
Yet I must have aid.
(Shouts for help.)

What, ho!—Oh, live to bless your father's heart!
My child, my treasure, all that I possess
Is thee, my Blanche!—I cannot part with thee!
Oh, do not die!

Blan.—(In the agony of death.) Help, father!—Raise me up!
Give me some air!

Trib.— My arm hath pressed on thee.
I am too rough. I think 'tis better now.
Thou hast more ease, dear Blanche!—For mercy's sake,
Try but to breathe 'till some one pass this way
To bring thee succor.—Help! Oh, help my child!

Blan.—(With difficulty.) Forgive him, father!

(She dies. Her head falls back on his shoulder.)

Trib.—(In an agony.) Blanche!—She's dying!—Help!
(He runs to the ferry bell and rings it furiously.)
Watch! murder! help! (He returns to Blanche.)
Oh, speak to me again.

One word—one, only one. In mercy, speak!
 (Essaying to lift her up.)
 Why wilt thou lie so heavily, my child?
 Only sixteen!—so young! Thou art not dead.
 Thou wouldst not leave me thus. Shall thy sweet voice
 Ne'er bless thy father more? Oh, God of Heaven!
 Why should this be? How cruel 'twas to give
 So sweet a blessing, yet forbear to take
 Her soul away ere all its worth I knew.
 Why didst thou let me count my treasure o'er?
 Wouldst thou had died an infant! aye, before
 Thy mother's arms had clasped thee! or that day
 (When quite a child) thy playmates wounded thee,
 I could have borne the loss. But, Oh, not now,
 My child! my child!

(A number of people, alarmed by the ringing of the bell, now come in, being present during the latter part of the foregoing speech.)

A Woman.— His sorrow wrings my heart!

Trib.—So you are come at last!—indeed, 'twas time!

(Turning to a wagoner and seizing him by the arm.)

Hast thou a horse, my friend—a loaded wain?

Wagoner.—I have. (Aside.) How fierce his grasp!

Trib.— Then take my head,
 And crush it 'neath thy wheels!—my Blanche! my child!

Another Man.—This is some murder! Grief has turned his brain:
 Better to part them. (They drag Triboulet away.)

Trib.— Never!—here I'll stay.

I love to look upon her, though she's dead.

I never wronged ye—why then treat me thus?

I know ye not. Good people, pity me! (To the woman.)

Madam, you weep—you're kind. In mercy beg

They drag me not from hence.

(The woman intercedes; they let him come back
 to the body of Blanche. He runs wildly to it,
 and falls on his knees.)

Upon thy knees—

Upon thy knees, thou wretch, and die with her!

The Woman.—Be calm—be comforted. If thus you rave
You must be parted!

Trib.— No! no! no!

(Seizes her in his arms, and suddenly stops in his
grief. His senses are evidently wandering.)

I think

She breathes again. She wants a father's care!
Go some one to the town, and seek for aid:
I'll hold her in my arms.—I'm quiet now.

(He takes her in his arms and holds her as a
mother would an infant.)

No! she's not dead, God will not have it so;
He knows that she is all I lov'd on earth.
The poor deformed one was despised by all,
Avoided, hated. None were kind to him
But she! she loved me, my delight, my joy:
When others spurned, she loved and wept with me.
So beautiful, yet dead! Your kerchief, pray,
To smoothe her forehead. See, her lip's still red.
Oh, had you seen her, as I see her still,
But two years old; her pretty hair was then
As fair as gold! (Presses her to his heart.) Alas! most
fouly wronged,
My Blanche, my happiness, my darling child!
When but an infant, oft I've held her thus:
She slept upon my bosom just as now—
And when she woke, her laughing eyes met mine,
And smiled upon me with an angel's smile.
She never thought me hideous, vile, deformed.
Poor girl! she loved her father. Now she sleeps!
Indeed, I know not what I feared before—
She'll soon awaken! Wait awhile, I pray,
You'll see her eyes will open! Friends! you hear
I reason calmly. I'm quite tranquil now;
I'll do whate'er you will, and injure none,
So that you let me look upon my child.

(He gazes upon her face.)

How smooth her brow; no early sorrows there
Have marked the fair entablature of youth. (Starting.)

Ha! I have warmed her little hand in mine. (To the people.)

Feel how the pulse returns! (Enter a surgeon.)

The W.—(To Triboulet.) The surgeon's here.

Trib.—Look, sir, examine, I'll oppose in naught.

She has but fainted, is't not so?

Surgeon.—(After feeling her pulse, says coldly.) She's dead!

(Triboulet starts up convulsively; the surgeon goes on examining the wound.)

The wound's in her left side. 'Tis very deep.

Blood must have flowed upon the lungs. She died By suffocation.

Trib.—(With a scream of agony.) I have slain my child!

(He falls senseless on the ground.)

Lawsuits Follow the Play.

As this remarkable play had been charged with indecency and immorality, the author replied with a manifesto. Then two singular lawsuits were brought, one by him against the Comédie Française for not carrying out its contract; the other by the managers of the theatre against the minister, M. d'Argout, who had forbidden the representation. But even in the constitutional monarchy the courts were sufficiently under the control of the government to make sure that the minister would be sustained. Both poet and theatre lost their suits.

Lucrèce Borgia.

Hitherto Hugo, even while introducing what were intended to be serious innovations in the French drama, had held firmly to its custom of requiring serious plays

to be in rhymed Alexandrines, and the gifted poet had no difficulty in executing the task. But in pursuance of his new ideas and his endeavor to approach closer to nature, he resolved to discard the fetters of verse. The first play of this kind was *Lucrèce Borgia*, in which he presented, also, a remarkable spiritual paradox, moral deformity purified by maternal love. The exhibition of such profound contrasts of human nature had a singular attraction for Hugo, and examples are found in all his longer works. In this Italian play he shows a thoroughly corrupt being, who yet may be saved by an intense pure love for her son, who has been brought up in ignorance of their relationship. In the story the wicked woman contrives the murder of five youths who have insulted her while watching with singular tenderness over the safety of her son. But when she finds that her beloved Sennaro is one of her victims, she sinks into woeful despair, while he, recoiling from her with disgust and horror, curses and kills her. The play abounds in strong situations and picturesque scenes. Like others of his powerful dramas, *Lucrèce Borgia* has been turned into an opera—by Donizetti—in which the music, by its independent effect, serves to distract the attention and partly reconcile the listeners to the gloom of the tragedy.

Another prose play was *Marie Tudor*, presented at the theatre in the autumn of the same year. It represented the English queen Mary, to whose name the terrible stigma of “Bloody” has been attached. Tennyson more than forty years later took the same character for one of his few dramas, but gave a far different



ADRIEN. MOREAU.

Ruy Blas (with the sword of Don Sallust in his hand):

I say, you have insulted now your queen.

Marquis, until to-day

Satan protected thee; but if he will

From my hands pluck thee, let him show himself.

'Tis my turn now.

RUY BLAS,—VICTOR HUGO.

*RUY BLAS KILLS DON SALLUST IN THE
PRESENCE OF THE QUEEN.*

After an original painting by A. Moreau

representation of the queen, who vainly sought to sway a headstrong people against their will. Hugo's *Marie Tudor* was highly successful, Mlle. Georges, an admirable actress, taking the leading part.

A third prose drama was promptly produced—*Angélo, Tyran de Padoue*, and had a favorable reception, though the public indicated a wish that the author would return to the established poetical form in which his greatest successes had been achieved. He so far yielded as to write the libretto of an opera, *Esmeralda*, taken from his great romance of *Notre Dame de Paris*, which he had published six years before, just after the great victory of *Hernani*. But, while the novel won immediate success, the opera failed.

Ruy Blas.

In November, 1838, the last of Hugo's successful dramas, *Ruy Blas*, was brought out at the new theatre of the Renaissance. It is, perhaps, the most original in conception and strongest in dramatic power. As in *Hernani*, the characters are Spanish, and the action takes place in that country, for which, as a scene of action, Hugo ever showed fondness. The story even recalls Figaro, for Ruy Blas is a lackey, a gay, careless rogue, who, under an assumed name, rises to the highest dignities of the state. Abundant use is made of historical material, but the play, like Hugo's others, is a pure invention. Among other characters is Don César de Bazan, a nobleman reduced to beggary, who yet retains a higher feeling than self-interest and is

impervious to certain temptations. He is, indeed, an improved manifestation of the Marquis de Saverny in *Marion Delorme*. The villain of the play is Don Salluste de Bazan, a disgraced nobleman, who has been dismissed by the queen, and suddenly disappears. From his concealment he tries to ensnare her so that her honor may be ruined. Ruy Blas, who has almost too readily accepted a commission from him, becomes an attendant of the queen, who is almost a prisoner in her palace. Filled with reverence for her majesty, he is astonished to find that he has won her heart. But he awakes to the foul design of his tempter and rejects with scorn a discreditable intrigue. He is shown to be an inferior overburdened with stolen greatness, while Don César de Bazan is found to retain his superiority of breeding in most adverse circumstances. *Ruy Blas*, more highly poetical than *Hernani*, and even better constructed, never reached quite the same height of public favor. It was, however, more successful in England than in France, the English version enjoying a remarkable run at a leading London theatre, with Fechter in the title rôle.

Hugo, again encouraged by popular applause, went on to compose the trilogy of *Les Burgraves*. It was presented in 1843, but was a dismal failure, and has never been revived on the stage. Some unflinching admirers of Hugo's poetry attribute its failure to the super-human greatness of its characters, rendering them impossible of representation. It is a picture of mediæval Germany, with its robber barons and the great emperor Frederick Barbarossa. This was the last of Hugo's

dramatic ventures. Henceforth he left the stage to those who sought merely to amuse a people bent on pleasure-seekings and indifferent to the higher objects of the drama.

Notre Dame de Paris.

The great romance already mentioned was begun just before the revolution of July, 1830, and published early in the next year. As he had used up a bottle of ink in writing, he gave it the ridiculous sub-title, *Ce qu'il y a dans une bouteille d'encre*, and in English it has been somewhat unfairly known as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Taken altogether, the *Notre Dame de Paris* is a wonderful panorama of that city in the reign of Louis XI. It is an astonishing accumulation of antiquarian learning, not always accurate, for the great inventor in the exuberance of his genius treats petty details with contemptuous mastery, using or abusing them as suits his pleasure. In the midst of his story an allegory partially lights up the weird features of the old world with strange Rembrandt effects. The Gothic cathedral was the centre of mediæval life. The struggle of human nature with superstition is depicted with impressive vigor. Claude Frollo, the terrible dark priest, recognizes no repentance or amendment for guilty sinners. Around him move king and knight, priest and rascal, Tristan the hermit, Quasimodo the hunchback, Esmeralda the gypsy girl, La Sachette the lunatic. But all are swept helplessly along by that relentless destiny whose Greek name is deciphered on an old stone in the wall. In this great romance, as in all the great imagin-

ative works of modern times, a sombre strain, entirely unknown to ancient tragedy, has an important place.

Hugo's Honors and Exile.

During the reign of Louis Philippe, Victor Hugo became a candidate for the Academy. But, though his position as the greatest lyric poet and dramatist could not be disputed, it was five years before he was able to overcome the conservative inertia of that great institution. Even then the dramatists Delavigne and Scribe voted against him. But Balzac, to his honor, withdrew from competition, lest Hugo's chances should be impaired. The name of Balzac, like that of Molière, is wanting to the glory of the Academy. In 1845 Hugo was made a peer of France, and in the Senate advocated giving permission for the return of the Bonaparte family to France. His poems had already shown a certain fervor in the Napoleonic cult. But he was not politically active until after the Republic of 1848 was established. Then, from being a moderate, he showed strong inclination to democracy. There was some talk of making him President of the Republic, but his old Bourbon attitude effectually prevented the attempt. His opposition to Louis Napoleon was intense, and when the *coup d'état* of December, 1851, was accomplished, Victor Hugo's name headed the list of the proscribed. He escaped to Belgium, and, after some months, fixed his residence in the island of Jersey, belonging to England but close to France. In 1855 he removed to Guernsey. Besides political pamphlets, which were

widely circulated in France, he wrote many long poems.

Les Misérables.

In 1862 Hugo's most famous romance, *Les Misérables*, was issued simultaneously in Paris and ten other leading cities of the world. It is an enormously large work, described by Hugo himself as "a sort of planetary system, making the circuit about one giant mind that is the personification of all social evil." The central story relates to a condemned criminal, who, after reformation, has, under an assumed name, led an honorable life and has been rewarded with election to high office, and then years later publicly confesses his identity with the galley-slave. But around this are gathered a host of other characters, stories and descriptions. Hugo is the supreme representative of one type of French genius, and in this colossal work his merits and defects are fully displayed. Brilliant, eloquent and rhetorical, he is urged on by impulse rather than reason. His *Misérables* was, indeed, one of the most successful romances of the age; nor has the lapse of nearly half a century detracted from its popularity; for the work belongs to a genus per se, and in the field which it covers there has been nothing like it before or since.

The sensational success of this romance led to the production of others. In *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* he described Guernsey and its fishermen. *L'Homme qui Rit* is an improbable story of a showman's life in England in the seventeenth century. But at intervals while working on these long romances Hugo issued

volumes of beautiful poetry and appeals to various governments in behalf of the oppressed. Like a prophet of Israel, he summoned kings and nations to work righteousness and show mercy, warning them of the judgment to come.

Return From Exile.

When the hateful Second Empire of France was overthrown, in 1870, the illustrious exile hastened to Paris and vainly besought the Germans to withdraw from France. He opposed the Commune, but joined the Radicals in the new division of parties. In 1876 he was elected a Senator for life. Thenceforth the literary patriarch lived in Paris, idolized by the people as the national hero. From time to time he issued poems, records of his past life, letters and dissertations on various subjects of public interest. His last powerful romance, *Quatre-vingt-treize*, treated of the royalist revolt in Brittany in 1793. His last drama, *Torquemada*, published in 1882, dealt with the Spanish Inquisition.

On February 25, 1880, the fiftieth anniversary of the first performance of *Hernani* was celebrated by a repetition of that famous play at the Comédie Française. The great actress, Sarah Bernhardt, took the part of Doña Sol, and at the close crowned the bust of Hugo on the stage. The seventy-ninth anniversary of his birth was joyously celebrated, and a procession of children testified their love for the writer. He died on the 22d of May, 1885, and France in a memorable funeral testified her grief at the loss.

III.

Alexandre Dumas.

Alexandre Dumas was the greatest and most prolific of the romance writers of the nineteenth century. He entered on his literary career at a time when the reading public was largely increased by the diffusion of education and the cheapness of paper and printing. The democratic impulse which produced the French Revolution, though defeated in its immediate aims, could not be entirely suppressed. "A revolution in letters," said Victor Hugo, "is a necessary consequence of a political revolution." A mere change in the form of government would not produce such result. But a change which had affected all classes and conditions, which had altered their opinions as well as their circumstances, must also revolutionize their literature. The first effect in France was seen in the enormous extension of periodical literature, the popular demand for newspapers. The next was in the rise of Romanticism, which, by its rejection of the laws of taste and criticism, hitherto supreme, gratified the restless spirit of the multitude. A literature intended for the mass of the people must be more simple and powerful, less

polished and refined, than that which seeks patronage from a learned and aristocratic class. This popular movement is the leading characteristic of the literary history of France in the nineteenth century. Alexandre Dumas was not its originator or director, but his works—romances, novels, tragedies, histories, travels and essays—are the most notable exponents of its progress and effect. All show the same power of invention and ability to gratify the love of novelty which characterized the new reading public.

The whole history of Alexandre Dumas is a romance as strange and full of contrasts as that of the Count of Monte Cristo. As in his own works the romance is not confined to a single life, but extends to past generations. Behold his grandfather—a gallant noble of the old régime—Marquis Davy de la Pailleterie, sent as a government official to the West Indies. In that tropical climate he takes as his mistress a comely woman of color—Louise Dumas. The offspring of this strange liaison received a fair education and a commission in the French army. In the wars which carried the French flag over Europe his dashing exploits raised him to the rank of general. But his ungovernable temper brought on him the censure of Napoleon, who sent him back from Egypt to languish in obscurity. He married an innkeeper's daughter, Marie Labouret, and died when their son Alexandre was but four years old. This son, who was to make the name Dumas famous throughout the world, was born on the 4th of July, 1802, at the little town of Villers-Cotteret. His pious mother was devoted to the care of her wayward boy,

but could find no place to suit him in a country town. When he was twenty years old she went with him to Paris, hoping to find better opportunity for employment. General Foy, an old friend of his father, obtained for him a place as clerk under the duke of Orleans, with a yearly salary of a thousand francs. Office duties occupied the day, but the evenings were spent in study and amusements. Play-writing then attracted ambitious youths.

First Attempts at Play-Writing.

With a friend, De Leuven, Dumas composed a farce called *Le Chasse et l'Amour*, which was brought out in September, 1825. The next year he wrote a vaudeville which tickled the fancy of the public, and a tragedy which the managers refused. In 1827 a troupe of English actors, including Macready, visited Paris, and treated that capital to a series of Shakespeare's plays. This sight stirred Dumas to new efforts. A painting in the salon of that year furnished him a subject—the death of Monaldeschi, the physician and favorite of Queen Christina of Sweden, whom, after her abdication and while sojourning in France, she executed for betrayal of her secrets. A tragedy in verse, called *Christine*, was speedily produced and offered to Baron Taylor, manager of the Théâtre Français. Taylor submitted it to a committee of actors, who declared that they could not tell whether it was classic or romantic. The first mutterings of the coming storm were heard, and the actors inclined to the old style. But the author

exclaimed, "What matters that? Is it good or bad?" They referred the decision to Picard, a regular dramatist of the theatre. Picard, after examination of the play, asked Dumas what was his occupation, and learning that he was a clerk to the duke of Orleans, advised him to go back to his desk. Other difficulties arose, and the play was withdrawn. Later the author revised and enlarged it into a trilogy, with the sub-title *Stockholm, Fontainebleau, Rome*, indicating the change of scene. It was now unmistakably romantic, but not equal in poetic vigor to Victor Hugo's masterpieces. Had the original been fairly brought before the public, it would probably have been condemned outright.

Henri III et sa Cour.

Dumas, nothing daunted, tried a new historical play, this time thoroughly romantic and even in prose. *Henri III et sa Cour* was first acted February 11th, 1829. It was the first French play in which modern history was put directly on the stage as Scott had done in his novels. It took the public by surprise on its first presentation, and by its local color and appeal to national feeling won a victory for Romanticism before they were fully aware what it meant. Its brilliant exhibition of the king's court and its rapidity of action caught and charmed the audience, too often wearied with the dignity of classic tragedies. Its extraordinary success brought the poor clerk more than \$6,000, and henceforth he was devoted to the stage until still more lucrative offers demanded his powers.

With all its energy, and even violence, *Henri III* retains a notable dignity and elevation of expression. It exemplifies admirably the fundamental principle of historical fiction already exhibited in Sir Walter Scott's novels. This principle requires that actual historical personages shall not be made too prominent in the novel or play; they must enter incidentally and not be the heroes of the fiction. That place of interest is reserved for characters who are wholly the invention of the author, or at least are so slightly known from history that he may adapt them entirely to his artistic purpose. The real characters will therefore form part of the background, while the fictitious stand in bold relief. Observe the working of this principle in *Henri III*. That king is seen clearly in his true character, courageous and crafty, yet effeminate; his mother, Catherine de Medicis, appears in contrast determined, intriguing and masculine, while the duke of Guise is shown stern and rigorous. But in the foreground we observe the creations of the dramatist's imagination, the melancholy and devoted hero, St. Mégrim, and—the proud and noble heroine, Catherine of Cleves.

The outline of the story may thus be given: King Henri, in spite of his shrewdness, is under the control of his mother, who is afraid that St. Mégrim is obtaining ascendancy over him, and fears still more the increase of the power of the duke of Guise in the government. To counteract these movements she encourages St. Mégrim's love for Catherine of Cleves, the duke's wife. She brings them together at an astrologer's room, from which the duchess flees on the sudden approach of the

duke. But the latter picks up the handkerchief she had dropped in her haste. In the second act the duke and St. Mégrim dispute in the king's presence, and he foolishly thinks it proper to make St. Mégrim a duke so that they may fight as peers. The duel is appointed for the next morning. But in the third act the duke, fully clad in mail, by using his iron gauntlet on his wife's hand, forces her to write to St. Mégrim, bidding him come to her palace that evening. In the fourth act St. Mégrim receives the letter, but also obtains from the king a talisman which will protect him from death by fire or steel. In the last act St. Mégrim enters the apartment of the duchess, and while she tries to tell him of her attempt to give him warning of the design on his life, the outer door is heard to clang and armed men ascend the stairs. At this critical moment a bundle of rope, thrown through the window by the page of the duchess, falls at St. Mégrim's feet. The duchess thrusts her arm like a bolt through the staple of the door to afford him time to escape. When the duke enters he goes straight to the window. His retainers have caught and wounded St. Mégrim below, but he still lives. "Perhaps he has a talisman against fire and steel," cries the duke; "strangle him with this," and drops his wife's handkerchief to his hirelings.

This meagre outline perhaps shows rather the defects of the play than its strength. French wits readily found weak spots in it, and made an amusing parody. The English adaptation, *Catherine of Cleves*, was ridiculed in Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends*. Yet it still ranks as Dumas' dramatic masterpiece, though proved to consist

of entire scenes stolen from Schiller, almost without changing a word, albeit the plot is original.

Antony.

After the Revolution of 1830, Dumas hastily patched up from the numerous memoirs of Napoleon a play bearing the emperor's name. But it has no value, historical or literary. The only character worth remembering is a heroic ubiquitous spy, ever ready to sacrifice himself for his adored master. Far different is the other play produced in 1831, and afterward declared by the author, perhaps ironically, to be his most notable work. The advocates of Romanticism denounced the restraints of classic tragedy and demanded full liberty to exhibit human passion, however revolting, on the stage, as in literature.

Antony was such an audacious exhibition of conjugal infidelity that even French critics have to apologize for its success. It was owing, they say, to the rapidity of the action which prevented the spectators from thoroughly realizing the surprise of the climax before it was over. The leading character, Antony, being illegitimate, had been afraid to ask his beloved Adèle to marry him. But when he returns, after an absence of three years, he finds her a wife and mother. He saves her life from a runaway before her door, but is himself seriously injured and is taken into the house. That he may remain longer in this dangerous proximity he tears the bandages from his wounds. In the second act Adèle finds his passion so strong and almost overpower-

ing that she decides to journey secretly to her husband at Frankfort. In the third act Antony is at a post-inn on the road, having learned of her flight, and already passed her. He engages the only two rooms and sends off all the horses with his servants. Adèle arrives and has to wait until the horses return. At the landlady's request Antony gives up one of the rooms he had taken, but by means of a balcony he returns to it later and surprises Adèle. In the fourth act they are in Paris again, but their relations have become the subject of gossip, and at a party where they are present allusions are made and a dispute provoked. Adèle withdraws early, and Antony follows her when he learns that her husband is returning from Frankfort. In the fifth act the guilty pair are in her room preparing for flight, but Adèle is in doubt what to do about the child. Antony is willing to take it, but the mother fears that her shame will be visited on the innocent, and cries out that death would be better than exposure. In the midst of their discussion a double knock is heard. The husband has arrived. Exposure is inevitable. Adèle, dreading the shame, cries for death. Antony asks if she means what she says; if to save her reputation and her child's she would forgive him for slaying her. In her frenzy she begs for death. Antony kisses her and stabs her. The door is broken in. The husband enters with servants. They see the woman dead. "Dead, yes, dead," says Antony; "she resisted me, and I killed her." The curtain falls.

This terrible play is, of course, improbable, and even unnatural. Yet the author, by well-managed dialogue

and swift-moving action, aroused and kept up the interest of the spectators till the bloody catastrophe. It was a hazardous experiment, even with a Parisian audience, which is never more delighted than when a play trembles on the brink of the improper, suggests most vividly, without actually performing, indescribable wickedness. Yet here adultery and murder were boldly presented, and in spite of the shock were allowed and applauded because they came with sudden surprise. *Antony* became forthwith a beacon to daring dramatists and had many successors which flooded the Paris stage with violent, ungovernable passions and bloody monsters. But no adaptation of it, nor any play of that vile kind, has ever been acted in an English or American theatre, for managers know that it would be driven from the boards by an indignant public.

A curious question arose when Victor Hugo's *Marion Delorme*, which had been prohibited under Charles X, came to be acted in Louis Philippe's reign. Some critics detected in Didier a plagiarism from the character of *Antony*, but Dumas promptly came forward to relieve his brother dramatist of the offensive charge. He acknowledged that he had heard Hugo read his play before *Antony* was written. He frankly confessed that *Marion Delorme* had deeply impressed him and greatly enlarged his views of the possibilities of the drama. *Antony*, therefore, may be regarded as a bold and successful transformation of Didier, a repetition in a lower social scale of a difficult subject. Of this work it has also been said, not without truth, that it may be characterized as one of the first of the many outrages

on public morality that made conjugal infidelity the favorite theme of the French drama.

Tour de Nesle.

Dumas' next play, the *Tour de Nesle*, caused a remarkable furore in Paris. It was more exciting, and even more brutal, than his former works. Although replete with improbabilities, the conflict of interest and emotions quickly enlists the attention, and the swift rush of the action carries the audience along breathlessly. The complicated plot, most intricately involved, is gradually unrolled with the utmost simplicity. Not until all is over can the spectators take thought on the real nature or meaning of the thrilling drama. Like its horrible predecessor, it contains adultery and murder, and to increase the burden it adds incest. And the apology is made that such crimes were frequent in the age to which its action belongs, and that even all of these crimes are presented in the ancient tragedies. But the modern exhibition of such flagrant wickedness is more shocking because it brings the action within the range of contemporary life. It is no longer seen as a picture of remote events, rendered innocuous by the departure of the paganism to which it belonged, but is shown as a possible and even actual occurrence of the present state of civilization. It opens a yawning abyss at our very feet. It fills us with unspeakable terror.

In his early plays Dumas had drawn liberally from Sir Walter Scott, from Schiller and from Lopé de Vega. Later he translated the whole of Dean Milman's *Fazio*

and offered it to the public, in French verse, as the *Alchimiste*. So long as these appropriations were foreign authors the French critics knew little about it, and cared less. But now the *Tour de Nesle* brought up quite a different question. As well as can be made out in the smoke of controversy, the story runs thus: Frederic Gaillardet wrote a play on that subject and submitted it to manager Harel. The latter accepted it, but gave it to Jules Janin to be revised. Still not satisfied with it, he turned it over to Dumas. According to his own account, Dumas rejected most of the dialogue, but retained the situations, and wrote new dialogue to suit. In his bargain with the manager it was stipulated that Gaillardet should be paid as author, while his own fee should be independent. Harel wanted to announce Dumas as joint author, but the latter refused permission. Then Harel put it on the bills as "by MM. * * * and Gaillardet." Gaillardet made public complaint of the treatment, and Dumas retorted, telling his part in the transaction. The two dramatists, being Frenchmen, fought a duel without bloodshed. After that they went to law. The litigation lasted for years, but though the case was decided in Gaillardet's favor, it does not appear that he ever had any other triumph as a dramatist. In the end he politely acknowledged the great service Dumas had rendered to the play.

In 1836 Dumas brought out *Don Juan de Marana; or, The Fall of an Angel*, a mystery-play in five acts. It was a strange reversion to the mediaeval religious drama, and the subject, properly handled by the poet

Calderon, might have been acceptable in Spain. But Dumas, taking the outline from Molière, surrounds the typical Don Juan with the good and evil angels of his family, who are battling for his soul. Most of the scenes are on the earth, though one is in a tomb, in which a dead man returns to life for a moment, and another is in heaven, in which a good angel begs permission of the Virgin Mary to be allowed to enter the world as a woman that she may be more closely united with her beloved Don Juan. Such an extraordinary production was truly a wild anachronism and an outrageous attack on all the decencies of life and sanctities of religion. Thackeray, with all his fondness for Dumas as a novelist, revolted from this play, and even called upon the French government to suppress such immoral exhibitions. Another object of Thackeray's attack in his *Paris Sketch Book* was *Kean*, a play in which the hero was the famous but erratic English actor, Edmund Kean, whom Dumas treated as a hero of tragedy. It was easy to expose the absurdity of the attempt.

Caligula.

In another drama Dumas attempted something which was plainly beyond his power and partly at variance with the tone of his life. In *Caligula*, according to his eloquent preface to the published edition, he wished to exhibit the worldly grandeur and corrupt luxury of pagan imperial Rome, which had at last reached such a state that it could no longer have trust in earth or heaven; it had the full catacombs below, while above

was an empty Olympus. Yet this city was the pre-destined crucible in which the human race was to be transformed by heat, and a gigantic mould, from which was to come forth a new world. The author's professed aim was to set forth the power and consolation of Christianity amid the destruction of paganism. The play, however, by no means reaches this sublime revelation. It dwells on the frightful crimes and terrible death of the worst of the Roman emperors. Stella was intended to impersonate the Christian faith and the martyr spirit, but her belief really has no effect on the course of the story. She is the daughter of Caligula's nurse and becomes the victim of the emperor's brutality. Her death is avenged by her mother and her betrothed. Increased interest may attach to her from her higher belief, but it has no effect on the result. Dumas was utterly incapable of representing ideal purity and faith, and his attempt to do so results in mawkish sentiment. On the other hand, he is quite in his element in delineating the ferocity and brutishness of such a monster as Caligula. A more striking character is the dissipated patrician Lepidus, who, being denounced to the emperor for uttering seditious language, opens his own veins in his bath, in order to escape a more ignominious fate. The sudden change in the reckless youth, who goes jesting to death, is a masterly stroke of dramatic effect.

The Count of Monte Cristo.

In consequence of the duel already mentioned, Dumas was directed to leave France. He set off on a

tour through Switzerland, which suggested to him a new kind of literary labor. With the aid of old memoirs and guide-books he compiled stories of travels, pieced together with imaginary dialogues and adventures. They proved as successful with readers as his plays had been with theatre-goers. They also broke the way for his romances. The first of these, the *Count of Monte Cristo*, appeared in 1844 and excited universal interest. It was speedily translated into all the languages of Europe, and was circulated in many editions in the New World as well as the Old. This extravagant romance is a complete revelation of Dumas' own inmost nature. He himself, by his literary genius, had conquered a high place in the world, but his dream was to rise to supreme importance. If he could not realize that for himself, he could paint the picture which the world would admire. The character of Edmond Dantes has become proverbial. His mania for the extravagant use of the treasure he has discovered is carried to an extreme which finally repels readers. The scenes formerly accepted as true pictures of Parisian society in the middle of the nineteenth century are now rejected as false and theatrical. Balzac and others have shown more accurately the realities of that period.

The *Count of Monte Cristo* was closely followed by the no less famous *Three Guardsmen*. These remarkable productions were written, from day to day, for publication in a newspaper, and thus firmly established the *feuilleton* as an element of French literature. For the basis of his story Dumas was greatly indebted to the large number of memoir writers who have recorded

copious details of the history and society of France since the fifteenth century. But these furnished only the raw materials which he skilfully worked up for his own purpose. He cared comparatively little for a cunningly entangled plot. While certain events hold a central place in his novels, they are enveloped with incidents which have no bearing on the most important. Two or three themes are taken up and intermingled, while the narrative runs on without flagging. His characters are rather types than individuals. He spends no time on analysis of their thoughts and purposes, but sets them to work in a very lifelike way. Some of the characters recur again and again, but they are always carefully distinguished from each other. In different series other characters of similar types occur, but they are never confused. They never become mere duplicates. Dumas is a master of dialogue, and by it was able in an astonishing degree to express action. He carries the reader breathlessly along and is able to spin out interviews to the length of several chapters without producing weariness. Unfortunately some of the long talks and conspiracies end in nothing. Yet, on the whole, the reader's attention is held, his interest in the adventures secured, and his affection for certain of the characters firmly maintained. In most of his stories it is impossible for any one to withdraw his attention when once fairly engaged or to avoid identifying himself with the imaginary characters.

The finest series of his novels are those that belong to *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, the chivalric D'Artagnan, the mighty Porthos and the gentle Aramis. The his-

torical period in which they are placed seems to have been the best adapted to call forth the author's powers, perhaps because he was most thoroughly acquainted with the time. In those belonging to an earlier period he was not able so thoroughly to manipulate the materials, and did not venture on the little touches which would give life to the scenes. His novels relating to contemporary society fall below the historical romances. In *La Tulipe Noire*, though wandering outside of his usual field, he produced one of his most charming stories, perhaps unduly prolonged. It was not to be expected, when he was in the full rush of productiveness, that he would neglect the broad field of the Revolution, yet his stories relating to it are not so brilliant or powerful as might have been expected. The overwhelming magnitude of the Revolution demands powers of a different order, and the prominent facts of its history, being too well known, can with difficulty be rearranged or brought into harmony with the novelist's inventions. Yet *The Queen's Necklace* and its accompanying stories will long continue to be devoured by those who prefer to learn history indirectly.

Plagiarism.

The charge of plagiarism which was made so openly about Dumas' plays was frequently repeated about his romances. In a certain way it was true beyond dispute. His high reputation as a successful writer caused him to be beset and tempted by eager publishers. He made engagements to write beyond what it was in the power of any one to fulfill. He called in a number of collabora-

rators, who furnished help of all kinds. They suggested subjects and ideas, studied authorities, wrote outlines, chapters and volumes under his direction. Some even brought to him their work complete to be transmuted by his magic pen from dross to gold. When it appeared before the world it bore his unmistakable hall-mark. Maquet and other respectable writers, who are sometimes credited with composing entire novels which bear the name of Dumas, were never able, in those which they issued without his aid, to attain the same effect. Dumas boldly acknowledged his practice of appropriating the ideas of others. He did it by what he called "the right of conquest." "All human phenomena," he says, "are public property. The man of genius does not steal; he only conquers. Every one arrives in his turn, and at his hour seizes what his ancestors have left, and puts it into new shapes and combinations." In spite of the long series of criticisms in which the complicated ramifications of his literary shop were ruthlessly exposed, and in spite of the law-suits which established the charges as proved, Dumas went on his way, triumphant over his critics and persecutors. The final judgment seems to be that his title to the works which bear his name is fully justified, though the mode of acquisition was often unjustifiable.

Dramatizations.

Dumas, with the assistance of Maquet, tried also to dramatize some of his own romances. But these attempts are decidedly inferior to the earlier plays. They

were merely a number of scenes pieced together without the essential unity and careful development of plot. That such long, drawn-out stories as the *Three Guardsmen* should be compressed within the limits of five acts is manifestly impossible. The only reason that these new plays had any success lay in the desire of those already familiar with the stories to witness the same in action. A succession of tableaux might answer this purpose, but they could not form a real drama.

Yet, along with these make-believe dramatizations, the never-tiring Dumas continued to bring out real plays. He was even bold enough to modernize one of Racine's classic tragedies by adapting it to a story from French history. He offered to the French a *Hamlet* and a *Catilina* in verse, and an adaptation of Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* in prose. But these, and others of a similar kind, added nothing to his reputation.

Comedies.

But the veteran dramatist and prolific romance writer did win new laurels when he ventured into the ever-open field of comedy. Dumas may have held aloof from it so long because it was so well and so completely occupied by the industrious Scribe, and because it seemed not sufficiently capacious for his ambition, but when at last he did spring into it he showed no failure of power or lack of innate disposition. He was able to give a new turn to this mirthful mode of exhibiting life. While resembling the plays with which Scribe pleased that generation rather than like the masterpieces of

Molière or Beaumarchais, they had a freshness and brisk swing which captivated the public. His comedies show a nimble glancing wit like that of a clever man of the world. Among the few which he gave to the world may be specially mentioned as founts of enjoyment, the *Jeunesse de Louis XIV*, *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*, the *Demoiselles de St. Cyr* and *Mariage sous Louis XV*. The sprightly *Mari de la Veuve* gives endless amusement by neglecting to supply an answer to its own riddle.

Comparison With Hugo.

Compared with his great contemporary Victor Hugo, who is justly acknowledged as the literary sovereign of his century, Dumas is in general inferior. Hugo was a poet, and both in his dramas and his lyrics rose to heights which Dumas could never attain. Hugo had a lofty moral nature which raised him far above his fellow-Romanticist. Yet Dumas had a practical genius in both drama and romance which enabled him to exercise a more potent and widely-pleasing effect than his great rival, who ever remained his friend. Dumas was ever ready to extol Hugo's loftier genius, and to acknowledge his own indebtedness to him. Yet he knew his own comparative value. He is reported to have said in regard to their dramatic ability: "We each had our own good qualities, but mine were better. Hugo was lyrical and theatrical; I was dramatic. Hugo, to be effective, could not do without contrasting drinking songs with church hymns, and setting tables loaded with flowers and flasks by the side of coffins draped in black. All I

wanted was four scenes, four boards, two actors, and a passion." This judgment cannot be pronounced vain or partial. It is a verdict accepted by the best critics.

Dumas' Extravagance.

While Dumas earned vast sums by his multitudinous literary enterprises, he was recklessly extravagant in his mode of life. With a view of dazzling his countrymen and gratifying his own love of display he built a large theatre for the production of his own works, and a gorgeous castle at St. Germain, on which he lavished every adornment. But, in spite of all the aid of his collaborators, he was not able, perhaps did not care, to fulfill all his reckless contracts to supply newspapers with stories and what-not, and they resorted to the law for damages. When the great romancist appeared in court to defend himself, he furnished new entertainment for the novelty-lovers of Paris. As might be expected he lost his suits. His theatre opened rather inauspiciously with one of his plays, which took two nights to perform. The turmoil of the Revolution of 1848 plunged it into difficulties. From his assiduous attendance on the Orleans family he was suspected of disaffection to the new Republic. He attempted to recover his lost ground by publishing a newspaper called the *Mousquetaire*. But after a few numbers he grew tired of the effort, and yet afterward renewed the heavy labor. Under the second empire his popularity seemed for a time to be renewed, but his restlessness and extravagance prevented improvement in his affairs. When Garibaldi in-

sisted on liberating Italy in 1860, Dumas attached himself to the daring enterprise as a lieutenant. As a reward for his services he obtained appointment as Director of the Museum and Explorations at Naples. But he was soon forced to resign and returned to Paris, ready to sell his talents to any purchaser. His love of pleasure continued, and his old age was disgraced with a scandalous infatuation which excited the contempt and pity of all who knew him. In 1870, the broken-down magician of the pen was removed from Paris to Puys, near Dieppe, where he died on the 5th of December, 1870, affectionately tended by his son and daughter.

As the most brilliant writer of his age, Dumas' earnings were proportionately large, his average income exceeding \$50,000 a year. Yet in his last years he suffered from extreme poverty, and died almost without a sou. To support himself he was compelled to resort to all manner of expedients, borrowing money and obtaining it by shifts that in another would not be considered honest. He was glad to write puffs for tradesmen, to exhibit himself in shop windows and to introduce schemes to the public, which, from their absurdity, excited only laughter. Nevertheless, his memory was always treated with respect, and in April, 1872, his remains were removed to Villers-Cotterets, and interred in presence of the leading littérateurs of Paris.

The works that bear Dumas' name amount to some twelve hundred volumes, though how many of them were entirely his own will probably be never ascertained. Of his sixty dramas, not more than three or four are now remembered, and two only, the *Mariage*

sous Louis XV and *Mdlle. de Belle Isle*, have been added to the répertoire of the Comédie Française. The dialogue in all the dramas of Dumas is full of spirit and dramatic propriety, and this is greatly to his credit, for he was paid by the line, and this was a sore temptation to spin out matter to the fullest extent. Its effect is seen, however, in his stories, where undue expansion, owing to the necessities of the feuillston system, has been found a serious obstacle to their popularity.

IV.

Eugène Scribe.

Eugène Scribe was the most prolific of the dramatists of France. Living at the time when the contest between the opposing hosts of Romanticists and Classicists was in progress, he kept aloof from the battle and pursued the even tenor of his way in ministering to the amusement of the lighthearted populace. Without aiming at great achievements, at the high prizes of literature, he won liberal applause and enviable wealth, the good will of his contemporaries, a seat in the Academy, an honorable place in the history of the drama. No other composer of plays was ever so uniformly successful over so wide an area. In the half century of his unflagging industry he produced more than four hundred dramatic pieces of various kinds, besides a dozen novels. What is called the complete edition of his works comprises over sixty closely-printed volumes, and this by no means contains all the plays put forth under his name and with his collaboration. Many more, which were just as well received on the stage in Paris or in provincial theatres, have never been put in print. Astonishing as is the literary output of the great Dumas, his contem-

porary, Scribe far outstripped him in amount, though by no means in quality. The illustrious Voltaire surpassed him in the universality of his genius, and may have equalled him in the actual amount of writing. Only in Spain do we find record of another dramatist so perseveringly prolific—Lopé de Vega. While Dumas made fortunes and squandered them in extravagance, Scribe, by good management, retained the wealth which he acquired by persevering industry and ability to please a theatre-going public.

It is essentially to his rare faculty of pleasing, of laying hold of that which at the moment suited the popular taste, first making sure in what direction the dramatic wind was blowing, that the phenomenal success of Eugène Scribe must be ascribed.

A Dramatic Editor.

Though the name of Eugène Scribe appears on hundreds of dramas of every kind—vaudevilles, comedies, tragedies and opera libretti—he was, in fact, rather a dramatic editor than a dramatic author. For many years his financial success made him an object of envy, but while he has never pleased those critics who judge by purely literary tests, his character stands very high for literary probity and generosity. It is said that he paid sums of money for “copyright in ideas” to men unaware that he had taken suggestions from their work. Scribe’s industry was untiring, and he had a perfect knowledge both of the mechanism of the stage and of the tastes of the audience. But his style was vulgar, his

characters commonplace and his plots lacking in power and grasp.

Early Life.

Augustin Eugène Scribe—to give him for once his full name—was born in Paris on Christmas day in 1791. His father kept a small shop and died while the son was yet an infant. The mother, having sold out the shop, was able to live in modest comfort, even during the stormy days of the first Republic. The boy was educated at the college of Saint Barbe in Paris, and won the honor of coronation by his proficiency. Among his schoolmates were Casimir and Germain Delavigne, with whom he was afterwards associated in literary pursuits. Destined for the bar, he was placed in an attorney's office. But on his mother's death Eugène withdrew from the dull work for which he had no relish. In company with his school friend, Germain Delavigne, he composed a farce which, by favor of the dramatist Dupin, was presented at the Vaudeville theatre, and hissed. Dupin, however, encouraged the young men to persevere. They tried again with no better success. Then a third and a fourth time the public rejected their efforts. At the fifth the actors were pelted from the stage. The still hopeful Dupin had faith in the ability of his young friends, and procured for them an introduction to another theatre, where they might retrieve their reputation. For this object a new comedy was based on *Gil Blas*, but it failed like the others. Delavigne withdrew from the hopeless task. Scribe worked with Dupin, and again the same fate pursued him. M.

Maquet, the eulogist at Scribe's funeral, said: "Nothing but frowns and disaster greeted him at the commencement of his career. Four years yielded him repeated failures. Only in the fifth did he gain his first success. A year later he won a second, and he had to wait another year for a third. Fortune obstinately withheld her favors. He was forced to snatch them from her unwilling grasp."

Scribe's First Success.

Scribe had found it impossible to succeed by following in the beaten track of the comedians of a past generation. He must abandon the well-worn ruts and strike out on a new path. On looking around him for a promising subject of actual life, he discovered it in the generals and soldiers who thronged the streets of the capital in 1816. In company with M. Poirson, who suggested the subject, Scribe composed a vaudeville in one act, called *Une Nuit da La Garde Nationale*. There was some danger that its boisterous fun might provoke the resentment of the soldiers, but in fact it became popular with them and set everybody laughing. The dauntless dramatist had at last struck a rich vein.

Scribe now went to work with renewed energy. In conjunction with various collaborators he produced comedies and vaudevilles. They were not yet uniformly successful, but the author profited by his experience. He transformed the vaudeville, which had been merely a parody of another play or opera, into an independent satire on foibles of the day. From being a loose-jointed series of verses he changed it into a unified play en-

livened by well-turned dialogue and smart jests. But the main dependence of even the shortest of these plays was on the plot which involved an entanglement as complicated and full of uncertainty as in a legitimate comedy.

Vaudeville.

M. Poirson, who had collaborated with Scribe in his first success, opened in 1820 the Théâtre de Madame—afterwards called the Gymnase—and engaged him to write for it exclusively for twelve years, furnishing twelve plays each year. The terms were liberal, and Scribe fully and generously performed his part of the contract. Recognizing vaudeville as his best assured field, he set himself to cultivate it thoroughly. He enlarged choice pieces to two acts and even to three. He changed them from merely jocular scenes of every-day life to fuller representations of character. He contrived situations which showed to the best advantage a central idea. The jingling couplets became of less account and were sometimes omitted. The subjects were of many sorts, sometimes rising to higher forms of sentimental comedy. They represent the contemporary life of middle-class society—on the one side the old soldiers and colonels, survivors of the Revolution and the Empire, on the other the new generation of money-makers, pushing their fortunes in the industrial development of the resources of France. Circling around these are young and careless idlers and pretty women. By jumbling these bright-colored stock characters in the kaleidoscope of his genius Scribe produced the wonderful succession

of entertainments which steadily drew crowds to his theatre. If to this talented and most prolific of writers cannot be accorded any high place in dramatic literature, he has given us in vaudeville, one of the most popular forms of theatrical entertainment—one that competes sharply with all the species commonly known as legitimate.

Collaborators.

From his unpropitious start Scribe had worked in collaboration with others, and he never hesitated to acknowledge the assistance he derived from their labors. Always a model of probity, he would not allow them to miss their proper share of public recognition nor of pecuniary compensation. The names of his associates in any play were regularly announced, although in several such cases the men thus rewarded could not claim a single line as their own. His old friend Dupin, to whose early encouragement Scribe owed his start, once brought his former protégé a poorly constructed piece, and asked him for suggestions to improve it. Scribe took it, struck out an act, added a character, and recast the whole under another title. Three weeks later Scribe invited the old gentleman to accompany him to the Gymnase. "I see," said the latter, "your *Michel and Christine* is to be brought out." "Yes," replied the other, "we shall have a good place to view it, and I wish your opinion of it." Dupin was soon absorbed in watching the progress of the play. After three scenes he pronounced it admirable, and asked who had collaborated with Scribe. "It will be announced at the close. Watch

the play.” Dupin found the next scene familiar, but could not recall where he had met it. The mystery was further increased but was finally cleared up, when at the successful termination the manager came forward and announced that the piece which had just been performed was the joint production of Messieurs Scribe and Dupin. Astonished and delighted, Dupin embraced his friend, and Scribe, smiling, exclaimed: “The unnatural father does not recognize his own children.” “Parbleu!” retorted Dupin, “who could recognize them when they are changed at nurse?”

The anecdote goes to prove that in the numerous plays published under Scribe’s name, the chief merit belongs to himself. He could and sometimes did dispense with the assistance of others. But in many cases they eagerly begged for the honor of the association, perhaps for its profit. Persons of eminence sought this distinction, and even King Louis Philippe is said to have joined in the production of a vaudeville.

Mastery of Stagecraft.

Scribe’s merit lay in the production of dramatic unity, in harmonizing the discordant characters and arranging the successive situations so as to produce the best possible effect. He was diligent in attendance at rehearsals, instructed the actors, and in turn learned much from them. He insisted that all should work hard, should learn their parts thoroughly, and leave no word or gesture to the impulse of the moment. If they declined the drudgery, he would have nothing to do with them.

Mirecourt well describes the feeling of the spectators of Scribe's plays:

Once involved in the inextricable network of plot, counter-plot and intrigue which Scribe weaves about you, you are no longer master of yourself, you must for the time being suspend the exercise of your taste and judgment, and admire kindly whatever he sees fit to present to you. Your eyes are riveted upon the stage, and you feel no inclination to withdraw them. The most common expression amuses you; a dialogue which you would never have consented to read, enlists your fixed attention. You follow eagerly all the intricacies of the plot from the commencement to the conclusion of the piece. When it is finished, you may perhaps ask, "After all, what does it amount to?" But your question comes too late. Five acts have been played. You have followed them to the end with unflagging interest. The effect the author had in view has been produced.

For fifty years Scribe was thus master of the French stage. Great social and political storms rose and raged around him, yet with consummate address he trimmed his sails to the shifting breezes of public opinion, and moved before the wind. Far from him to attempt to lead and direct the nation, or be the stern censor of social evils. While he improved the vaudeville, he made no great dramatic reforms. He simply sought to be an agreeable companion in lighter moments, and never looked beyond present enjoyment. His plays exhibit admirably the manners and tastes of the times in which they were written. They have no regard for the past, they do not look forward to the future, nor even below the surface of the present. They reflect the first half of the nineteenth century. Already they are becoming

obsolete, matters of curiosity for the student of the past.

Scribe an Academician.

When Scribe's prominence in the dramatic world was assured, he became a candidate for the Academy and was duly elected. Yet some of the members demurred. On the day of his reception one said, so that Scribe should hear, "We want no stock-brokers here," referring to the band of collaborators whose work Scribe was charged with appropriating to his own glory and profit. Another remarked in the same way: "That man ought not to have a chair. Give him a bench to seat his partners with him." But these envenomed shafts fell harmless. Those who had worked with Scribe were the most ready to acknowledge that the success of their joint productions was due to him. Furthermore, Scribe's best pieces were those which he had wrought alone, and next were those in which he had the largest share; for none of his collaborators possessed his gifts.

Rachel.

The great actress, Rachel, achieved her fame in the noblest classics of the French theatre. But in 1848 Scribe was requested by the Comédie Française to write a play for her. He hesitated to undertake a task beyond his powers; he could write plays in prose; he could write songs for the vaudevilles; but he could not write stately verse which would suit her genius. Another talented dramatist, Ernest Legouvé, tried to overcome his reluc-

tance, and only prevailed by agreeing to assist. The result was the great play of *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. Although its first performance was delayed by the Revolution of 1848, which for a time banished Scribe from the stage, yet when it did at last, it was one of Rachel's chief triumphs. But when she appeared in a second of his plays she had but indifferent success, and she attributed the fact to the peculiarity of her talents.

The Real Adrienne Lecouvreur.

The most famous French actress of the eighteenth century was Adrienne Lecouvreur. Her fame was revived in the nineteenth by the fact of her being made the heroine of the best drama in Eugène Scribe's long list, in which he was assisted by Ernest Legouvé, while the impersonator was her illustrious successor, Rachel. The original Adrienne was born at Damery in April, 1692. Her father was a hatter, and removed to Paris when his daughter was but ten years old. Their new home was in the thickly-populated Faubourg St. Germain, close by the Théâtre Français. Adrienne's childish beauty is said to have attracted the notice of some of the frequenters of the theatre. In some unrecorded way she and others of the young people of the neighborhood became stage-struck and formed a company of juvenile actors. They also obtained permission to perform in a temporary theatre in the courtyard of a mansion. One day the comedian Legrand, noted for his ugly face and kind heart, strolled in to observe the efforts of the youthful troupe.

Adrienne, then only thirteen years of age, was enacting Pauline in Corneille's tragedy *Polyeucte*. Legrand was astonished at her ability and reported it enthusiastically to his fellow-actors. Fearing that their income would be seriously diminished they resolved to get rid of the presumptuous rivals. With the aid of an influential friend they got a *lettre de cachet* for the arrest of the unlicensed players. As the young people were leaving the mansion toward evening they were secured and lodged in the Temple. It so happened that the grand prior, who had charge of this place of detention, was himself a theatrical amateur. By his orders a stage was prepared in a large room of the prison and here *Polyeucte* was repeated before a mixed audience of noble and citizen prisoners, with a sprinkling of jailers. Delighted with the performance, he took the responsibility of releasing the prisoners on condition that they should not molest their neighbors by competition. He was particularly struck with Adrienne's acting, and as she was retiring he paid her the compliment, "Heretofore the lines of Corneille have been sung, but that little girl speaks them."

Kind-hearted Legrand, remembering the talent he had discovered, undertook to train Adrienne for higher work. Afterward he obtained for her an engagement at Strasburg, where she appeared in both tragedy and comedy. Then she visited Nancy and other towns in Alsace and Lorraine. On her return to Paris such favorable reports were made that she made her *début* at the Théâtre Français in May, 1717, appearing in the part of Monime in Racine's tragedy *Mithridate*.

So complete was her triumph that she was at once pronounced the leading actress of the day. Her appearance is thus described: She was of medium height with admirably formed head and bust, bright, piercing eyes, a well-shaped mouth, and a slightly aquiline nose. Her manners, deportment and gestures were simple, dignified and graceful. Her voice of moderate extent and power, but she skillfully varied its modulations to suit the sentiment she desired to express. Seldom has so pure and distinct a delivery been heard on the stage. Her by-play was excellent; she possessed the difficult art of listening and exhibiting the various impressions which the words addressed to her would naturally produce. The parts in which she shone were those of Monime, Cornélie, Phèdre, Iphigénie, Bérénice and Pauline.

In the early part of her career she had a singular experience. While she was playing Roxane in Voltaire's *Bajazet* most of the spectators warmly applauded, but in a stage box one sat wrapped in a large cloak and apparently unmoved, except that at intervals he muttered "Good." When she afterward inquired who he was, she was informed that he was Dumarsais, a grammarian of some celebrity. Thereupon she wrote him a note inviting him to dine with her. When the time came the guest requested her, as a prelude, to recite a favorite passage. When she complied, he listened as before, merely repeating, now and then, "Good." When she asked for explanation and criticism, he replied: "Mademoiselle, in my judgment, you surpass in talent any other living actress. But you have yet some-

thing to learn. When you have succeeded in imparting to each word and syllable its proper inflexion and accentuation, you will surpass all who have preceded you." "And nowhere," replied Adrienne, with a smile, "can I hope to find a surer guide, a more efficient professor, than Monsieur Dumarsais."

But whatever she may have learned from the grammarian, Adrienne had a still more illustrious instructor in the great Voltaire, who was one of her devoted admirers. Some of the prettiest lines he ever wrote were addressed to her, and it is certain that a cordial response was given to the flattering expression of his attachment. Her beauty as well as her genius attracted numerous others of the highest society, so that she wrote, "It is become the fashion to dine or sup with me, since certain duchesses have recently taken it into their heads to do me that honor."

The Count d'Argental was fascinated by the charms of the actress and sought an opportunity to declare his passion. But his mother, in order to prevent him, solicited for him an appointment in a distant colony. Mdlle. Lecouvreur, learning of this movement, wrote to the mother an admirable note, in which she says: "Again, Madame, to unite your efforts with mine to counteract this weakness which distresses you, and for which I am really not to blame, I will write to him whatever you please; I will not see him again, if you so wish; I will go to the country if you think it necessary; but do not threaten to send him to the end of the world. He can be useful to his country; he will load you with praise and glory; you have only to direct his

talents and let his virtues have full play. Forget for a moment that you are his mother if that relation is opposed to the kindnesses that I beg of you for him. In short, Madame, you shall rather see me retire from the world than endure that he should hereafter be tormented by me or for me." Sixty years later that son, in arranging some papers, accidentally discovered the faded handwriting of the idol of his youth. No wonder he burst into tears, exclaiming, "She was better than I."

Still another nobleman, of yet higher rank, was smitten by the charms of Adrienne Lecouvreur. This was the famous warrior, Marshal de Saxe, natural son of Augustus II, elector of Saxony and king of Poland. Though he was, perhaps, incapable of a lasting attachment to any one, the beautiful actress did not hesitate to make sacrifices for him. When he left Paris on an expedition to recover the duchy of Courland she sold her diamonds and gave him the proceeds, amounting to forty thousand livres, that his troops might be well equipped. Yet subsequently he entered into an intrigue with the duchess of Bouillon, who imposed the condition that he should cease to hold any communication with the actress. But this roused the latter's resentment to such a pitch that when the duchess appeared at the theatre during the performance of *Phèdre*, she turned to the box where sat her triumphant rival, and exclaimed in the words of her part:

"I know my treacheries,
None, and am not one of those bold women
Who enjoying in the crime a tranquil peace
Know how to wear a countenance without a blush."

The audience applauded the outburst, and the duchess, crimson with rage, hastily left the theatre.

Even at this time Mdlle. Lecouvreur was ill, but she continued on the stage until March, 14th, 1730, when she played in Voltaire's *Œdipe*. Six days later she died. Various accounts are given of her illness and the cause of it. Voltaire and others declared it to be an attack of dysentery, but others asserted that she was poisoned with some pastilles administered by an abbé in the pay of the duchess. This story furnished the basis for Scribe's drama, but is not substantiated. An inquiry was instituted, and the abbé was imprisoned, but the actual facts were not clearly ascertained.

The actress bequeathed her estate, amounting to 100,000 livres, to the poor of the parish. On account of her profession her remains could not be buried in a churchyard. They were therefore secretly interred at midnight at a spot which is now on the site of the Chamber of Deputies. Voltaire wrote a spirited epigram on the disgraceful treatment of the brightest ornament of the French stage.

Holding that action, or even violent emotion, was unseemly, everything was told on the stage and nothing was done. As Victor Hugo put it in the preface to his *Cromwell*, published in 1827. "Instead of scenes, we have narrations; instead of pictures, descriptions. Grave personages, placed like a Greek chorus between us and the drama, come and tell us what is taking place in the temple, in the palace, in the public place, until we are tempted to call out to them, 'Indeed? Then why do you not take us there? It must be amusing, it must

be well worth seeing.’’ Still worse, not only was real emotion proscribed, but also the simple, homely, heart-felt words in which real emotion is wont to show itself. The language of tragedy had to be literary, and without any phase that was plucked from the roots or was racy of the soil. Such words as Shakespeare was wont to use without stint, simply and nobly, were shunned for a roundabout pomposity. The simple and direct word, to obtain which without baldness is the highest poetry, was always avoided. In its stead were strained and stilted verses, in which an infantile idea was swaddled in long robes of verbiage. By a process of selection and purification the vocabulary had become extremely impoverished. No welcome was extended to new words, and good, old words were constantly being thrust aside because they lacked “dignity.” There was a steady attempt to reach the grand style by the use of big words, and to attain elevation by standing on tip-toe. Thus, laced in a tight corset, poor tragedy could hardly breathe, and was, indeed, well-nigh at its last breath. Yet it died hard. Talma, whom Carlyle notes as incomparably the finest actor he ever saw, asked for Shakespeare, and got Ducis, and left the stage without having played one part really worthy of him.

Scribe’s Adrienne Lecourteur.

According to Scribe’s version of this story, Count Maurice de Saxe had pretended to be a poor lieutenant when he met the actress Adrienne, and she had fallen in love with him as such. He, however, had com-

menced a more important intrigue with the Princess de Bouillon, and had arranged an interview with her at the house of Mlle. Duclos, who is the mistress of the Prince. But the Prince, on being informed that the Count has gone there, supposes that the object must be to meet Duclos herself. Hoping to detect them, he orders all the doors to be locked before he enters. In the meantime Adrienne, entering first, is astonished to recognize her lover in the Count de Saxe.

Princess.—Here I am, in the house which my husband has fitted up for the fascinating Duclos, and which that estimable being has lent me as a place of interview with the Count de Saxe. Upon my word, it's very elegant—in the best taste. I have always looked upon the Prince as a miser, but it seems that a man's wife is the worst judge of his character in this respect, and that to test the liberality of his disposition we must inquire of his mistress. But I am here first; this is unpardonable, my gallant count—one can forgive an infidelity sooner than a want of politeness. Oh, at last!

(Enter Maurice.)

Maurice.—No reproaches. I had scarcely left the theatre, than I fancied I was watched by two men muffled in cloaks. I took a circuitous route to avoid them, and thus I have had to endure the calamity of being late.

Princess.—Pardon is granted, so let us think of business. All that the Cardinal de Fleury will grant you, is permission to levy two regiments for the conquest of Courland.

Mau.—And quite enough, too.

Princess.—Enough! Have you money to pay them?

Mau.—Not a sou.

Princess.—(Aside.) What a madman he is, but one loves him all the better. (To Maurice.) Then I suppose your memory is not able to make you aware that you owe seventy thousand livres on a bill of exchange to a certain Swedish count.

Mau.—Well! and what of that?

Princess.—No more than this. The Russian ambassador, who for political views touching Courland, would like to see you under lock and key, is most anxious to find the Swedish count, and purchase the bill, that he may have full facility of lodging you in a Parisian prison. But why should I undergo all this trouble for a person who is too heedless to take care of himself, and faithless enough to—care for another?

Mau.—You anticipated me—I had made up my mind in the course of the interview to confess——

Princess.—That you love another. Whom?

Mau.—One perhaps not worthy to be compared with yourself.

Princess.—But whom—whom? Answer! No—silence!—the sound of a carriage—it cannot be Duclos. Heavens! it is my husband, the Prince—numbers are with him. Hide me. If any one in the world knows that I have set foot in this house, my reputation is destroyed.

Mau.—This door, then.

Princess.—(Looking in.) Yes, it leads to a small boudoir.

Just as Maurice closes the door the Prince with an attendant abbé enters. As he knows that Duclos has not yet come from the theatre, his suspicion about her is relieved. He suspects nothing of the more serious reality.

Prince.—Ho, ho! we have caught you, Count. We have seen the lady.

Abbé.—We caught sight of——

Prince.—Of the flowing robe just as it slipped through the door.

Maurice.—Well, Monsieur le Prince, if you know all, and demand satisfaction on that account, we can just walk down the garden, and settle this affair in a few moments.

Abbé.—How? you see things in a wrong light. The Prince, with a magnanimity which reminds me of Scipio, far from

claiming any satisfaction, willingly allows you to retain your conquest.

Mau.—(Aside.) Give up his own wife? What can that mean?

Prince.—Yes, the Abbé is quite right—all that I wished to prove was that the power of Duclos over this too susceptible heart is gone forever.

Mau.—(Aside.) Oh, I see—he thinks the interview was with Duclos herself. (To the Prince.) Really, Monsieur le Prince, this magnanimity is quite affecting.

Abbé.—Yes, the treaty of peace between the Prince de Bouillon and Maurice Count de Saxe is to be celebrated amid the lustre of flambeaux and the rattle of champagne glasses, in the presence of the company of the Comédie Française, whom your humble servant will bring to the spot.

Prince.—In plain words—you will join our little supper as hero of the festival, when you will be surprised to meet a charming young person, one of the eminences of the day.

Mau.—Really you embarrass me.

(Enter Abbé with Adrienne.)

Prince.—Here she is. Mademoiselle Lecouvreur—the Count de Saxe.

Adrienne.—(Surprised.) Heavens! can it be that the Count de Saxe is—

Maurice.—(Whispers.) Is your humble lieutenant. He is—he is!—but silence!

Prince.—Well, now you are introduced to each other, my office, so far as you are concerned, is performed. You shall sit together at table.

Abbé.—Yes; for to tell you the truth—which is not flattering for us—mademoiselle only gave us the pleasure of her society for the sake of asking you some favor for a lieutenant, a friend of hers.

Adri.—A poor officer—with no other fortune than his sword.

Mau.—Whoever he is, your protection does him infinite honor.

Prince.—Abbé, 'tis your duty to look after the supper.

Abbé.—Yes; I am the guardian genius of fruit and flowers.

Prince.—I have a duty still more important—to take care that no one escapes before supper; I shall have all the doors locked—give a watchword, and till daybreak every one remains a fast prisoner here.

Abbe.—But Mademoiselle Adrienne has still a key.

Prince.—Ah! she, you know, is a privileged person, and has nothing to do with the rest.

Mau.—(Aside.) Heavens, what will become of the Princess! (Aloud.) My own Adrienne!

Adri.—You—the Count de Saxe; you, whom without a suspicion of your rank, I have loved——

Mau.—Hush, hush! there is more reason than ever that our love should remain a secret.

Adri.—Yes, yes!—I see, in the midst of your grand projects, the love of a poor humble girl like me might compromise you, if known. I understand—I understand. Acquire glory for yourself. I will be content to admire in secret, and ask no recompense but your secret love.

Maurice informs Adrienne that a lady who must be concealed from everyone is in the adjoining room, and trusts her safety to the actress. Adrienne, after he leaves, guards the room for a time, then, forming a new plan, extinguishes the candles, knocks on the door of the room and calls out the unknown Princess, whom she now feels to be a rival. When the latter comes from the door, both are in the dark.

Prineess.—What do you want?

Adrienne.—To save you. I have a key to the garden gate.

Princess.—Give it me. With my knowledge of the secret panel this is invaluable. If I could only find the panel—ha!

here it is—then I am saved. But you—you to whom I owe so much—who are you?

Adri.—No matter—no matter. Save yourself without delay—fly from the dangers that surround you.

Princess.—Who has told you that dangers surround me? Has Maurice dared?

Adri.—And what right have you to call him Maurice—and tremble as you pronounce his name. You—you love him.

Princess.—With all a woman's heart.

Adri.—She—she love Maurice! You—you love the man in whom my very existence is centred.

Princess.—Then it is you that I seek. Tremble. You know not my rank and power. I can crush you.

Adri.—Here, at least, I am your superior. I protect *you*.

Princess.—I *will* see your features—I *will* know my rival.

Prince.—We shall find out the truth.

Adri.—Lights are coming, you can satisfy your curiosity.

Princess.—No, no; it's my husband's voice; I would give the world, but I dare not stay.

(Enter Prince and Abbé, followed by two servants with lighted flambeaux who remain at door.)

Adrienne.—Vanished!

Prince.—Well, well, Abbé; I've every wish to believe you, but I must go into that room and look for myself.

Adri.—He could not have deceived me.

(Enter Michonnet.)

Michonnet.—She is safe—I saw her cross the garden and escape by the gate. She let this bracelet fall.

Adrienne.—She was alone?

Mich.—No; the gentleman was with her who called to see you at the theatre to-night—and who it seems is the Count de Saxe.

Adri.—Oh, horror! horror!

The entire troupe of the theatre have been invited to supper in the house of the Prince de Bouillon. There the Princess has already been preparing a poison for her rival, while Adrienne has sold her jewels to provide funds to release the Count de Saxe from imprisonment, which the Princess has brought about. Adrienne goes early to the house to carry out her plan.

Abbé.—How! Mademoiselle Lecouvreur here already! I hope that you have not come to say that we shall be deprived of your charming performance this evening?

Adri.—No, no—I have promised to contribute my humble efforts to the amusement of the Prince's guests, and I shall keep my word.

Abbé.—I breathe again. One of your admirers will be wanting to the party—the poor Count de Saxe.

Adri.—How?

Abbé.—An adventure, not of the most romantic kind, but vastly amusing. Our young hero, you know, was about to set out this very week for Courland—to conquer it—to become grand duke of it—or king, or emperor, or something—when, lo and behold! an enemy comes that is even too much for the sword of Saxe.

Adri.—And that is—

Abbé.—A bill of exchange for the trifling amount of seventy thousand livres.

Mich.—The very sum.

Abbé.—The Russian ambassador, to keep the youthful hero out of mischief, had bought the bill, they say, of one Count Kalkreutz.

Mich.—A Swede?

Abbé.—You know him, then—eh? But the best of the joke is, that the scheme of buying up the bill was put into the ambassador's head by a lady of quality—

Adri.—What lady of quality?

Abbé.—That, unfortunately, I do not know—but—I hope to learn. She was actuated, it seems, by a fit of jealousy. But I must tell my story to the Prince, who is equally at home in chemistry and in scandal. (Exit.)

Mich..—So! Adrienne—the seventy thousand livres are to set Count de Saxe at liberty.

Adri..—Yes.

Mich..—For this object you would sacrifice your entire fortune?

Adri..—Yes; my heart's blood if necessary.

Mich..—And yet you have reason to believe he loves another.

Adri..—Yes!

Mich..—How can you make these confessions so calmly?

Adri..—Because I know that one loves in spite of oneself—involuntarily—against one's will—

Mich..—Alas! you are right—as you always are—dear Adrienne!

Adri..—Maurice must be set at liberty. Stop—did not the Abbé say something about a lady of quality?

Mich..—Yes! the lady with the bracelet, no doubt—for whom he sacrificed you last night.

Adri..—You are right—you are right—but do not say it, my good Michonnet. You do not mean to wound me, but your words strike like a dagger into my heart. I *will* know this rival—I will know her—and then I shall be able to say to her, "Madame, it was you who cast Maurice into prison—it was I who set him at liberty. Decide—who loved him most."

Mich..—But why sacrifice yourself in this way to an ungrateful faithless man?

Adri..—To be revenged—revenged on *him* also. You hear it is his object to gain a duchy—perhaps a crown. Now mark—if I set him at liberty, and he proves successful, he will be forced to reflect—that it is to me—to me he owes all—that he is a king through the devotion of the humble actress. Try as he will, he can never forget me. His glory—his power—all that surrounds him will constantly speak

to him of the poor slighted Adrienne. It's a noble scheme of vengeance. Run—run as fast as you can, Michonnet—set him at liberty at once. You will find me at home; oh, a noble scheme!

After the company have assembled Adrienne receives marked attention, which increases the jealousy of the Princess.

Prince.—Ah! mademoiselle, how shall I thank you for the honor you confer on Madame de Bouillon and myself?

Adri.—Really I feel quite confused by such attention. You, and those noble ladies who have deigned to receive me—

Princess.—What's that?

Adri.—Afford an humble artist the rare opportunity of studying the elegance of manner which you alone possess.

Princess.—That voice! No, no—it must be a dream;—the voice must be in my imagination, not in my ears—Maurice could not prefer an actress to me—to the Princess de Bouillon. But why not? Are they not all yonder absolutely adoring her now? Might not he have done the same? Hateful doubt, that I must confirm or dissipate. Well, shall we not begin?

Prince.—Why we are all impatience, but I think we must wait a little longer for the Count de Saxe, as he promised to come.

Princess.—He will not come, you may be certain; for although as you say, he is set at liberty—(aside) did she change color?—you know he has been engaged in a duel.

Adri.—Ah!

Princess.—And, as the Abbé has told me, he is dangerously wounded.

Abbé.—Why, madam, I never said a—

Princess.—Silence! Ah! look, Mademoiselle Lecouvreur is fainting! It is she beyond a doubt.

Adri.—It is nothing—nothing! a mere transient indisposition; the light—the heat—that is all. Madame you overpower me with kindness. (Aside.) Heavens, what a look!

The Princess had spread a story that the Count de Saxe was wounded, but, to the surprise of all, he appears and is warmly greeted.

Abbé.—My dear Princess, why did you fasten upon me a story that I never told, about the Count being wounded?

Princess.—Why? Why, because you never tell anything worth hearing, and therefore I am obliged to invent something for you. Ladies, this unfortunate Abbé, who fancies himself the cleverest creature in the world, has for nearly two whole days endeavored to find out an unknown beauty adored by the Count de Saxe. There's talent for you! By the bye, it never struck me—perhaps Mademoiselle Le-couvreur can enlighten us on the subject.

Adri.—I, madame?

Princess.—Doubtless; for the world says that the object of this attachment is a person belonging to the theatre.

Adri.—Nay, madame. At the theatre they tell the story differently—they say it is a lady of quality.

Princess.—Then, in my version, there is something about a lady at night.

Adri.—And in mine, something about a visit to a certain house.

First Lady.—What a charming story!

Second Lady.—Yes; and the sort of haze through which one sees it makes it all the more delightful.

Princess.—In this house—for the house is in my story too—in this house, they say, the actress was surprised by a jealous rival.

Adri.—Now, I have heard that the great lady was forced to escape from the house by the arrival of an obtrusive husband.

Abbé.—Upon my word, these are the best informed ladies in the world. My dear Princess, when you knew so much about the matter why did you set me on the track?

First Lady.—Ah! after all I should like to see some proof which would show us which story is true.

Abbé.—So should I, so should I.

Princess.—Oh, that's easily given; my proof is a bouquet of roses, tied with a golden cord, and given by this redoubtable beauty to the conqueror of her heart.

Adri.—(Aside.) My bouquet! Now my proof is a bracelet, which the great lady dropped as she hurried through the garden. By the way, I have it with me.

Abbé.—Superb—magnificent!

Princess.—Yes; it seems tastefully made.

The Princess is going to take the bracelet, when the Prince and Maurice come through the door and join the party.

Prince.—Ah! what are you all looking at?

Abbé.—This bracelet—beautiful!

Prince.—Why, that's my wife's bracelet.

All.—His wife's!

Prince.—Yes; it's a very pretty thing, is it not?

Princess.—Prince, if you have done exhibiting my bracelet—. Thank you. Perhaps now—as the Count de Saxe is come—Mademoiselle Lecouvreur will condescend to recite a few lines.

Adri..—To recite at this moment!

Mich..—Do your best, my dear child—there are greater actors than you in this room.

Adri..—The cold assurance of that shameless woman is repulsive.

Princess.—We shall be quite delighted! an exquisite treat! Take your seats, ladies and gentlemen; you, Count de Saxe, will sit next to me.

Prince.—Come, now—what shall it be?

First Lady.—Hermione, in Racine's *Andromache*.

Abbe.—Or Camilla.

Princess.—Or suppose we say, the soliloquy of the deserted Ariadne in Thomas Corneille's tragedy.

First Lady.—Why not Phædra, which you played so admirably the other day?

All.—Yes, yes, Phædra—attention!

(Adrienne takes the central position, while the audience are grouped at the right.)

Adri.—“O, fatal is the deed which I have done,
I must behold my husband with his son;
The youth, aware of my unholy fire,
Will watch the face with which I meet his sire,
Knowing my heart swells with unheeded sighs,
Unheeded tears still glisten in these eyes.
Will he, indifferent to his father's name,
Conceal that love, which is my crime, my shame?
Conceal the horror which he feels for me—
Betray his king?—No, no—it cannot be.
Nay! if he tried to shield me—'twould be vain,
For I am one of those who cannot feign;
Not one of those who, sinning, shows no trace,
Blest with the gift of an unblushing face.”

(Points to the Princess. The Prince applauds unsuspectingly.)

Princess.—Admirable!—admirable! charming! the concluding point was in such exquisite taste too!

Prince.—Nothing could be better!

Mich.—What have you done, unhappy girl?

Adri.—I have taken my revenge. Prince, I am fatigued—ill, in fact—perhaps you will allow me to retire.

Princess.—Not a step in that direction. We are quite distressed to lose you so soon—but still if you must go—Mademoiselle Lecouvreur's carriage.

Adri.—Follow me.

8—Part III, Vol. IX.

Mau.—Impossible this evening, but—

Adri.—Impossible!—enough.

The scene of the last act is in Adrienne's own apartment. A servant enters with a small ornamented box.

Servant.—A chest for mademoiselle—the servant who brings it said it came from the Count de Saxe.

Adrienne.—From him—from him! What can it mean? My hand trembles; I—I dread to open it.

Michonnet.—And she fancies that she has ceased to love.

Adri.—Let me see—let me see. Look, look, Michonnet! it is my bouquet—mine! I held it in my hand when yesterday morning he called on me, after that long absence; he asked for it—I gave it as a slight token of love. And now, look, Michonnet, look; he might have cast it aside—trampled it under foot; but to send it back thus—ah! it is too cruel.

Mich.—It is not his act—it is not, I am sure; he has been compelled by your rival.

Adri.—Compelled! Oh! she commanded, did she?—and was he forced to obey? is he such a slave that he was forced to insult me whom he once—once loved? Poor flowers that have withered so soon, you have still outlived his promises. He covered you with kisses, but there is no trace of them on your leaves now—no traces of aught but neglect and insult. The last kiss you receive shall be of an eternal adieu—it seems like a kiss of death.

Mich.—Adrienne—Adrienne!

Adri.—Do not be alarmed—do not be alarmed; it has gone; I am better now—I am better now.

(Enter Maurice.)

Maurice.—Adrienne! my own Adrienne!

Adrienne.—Maurice! No, no—leave me—I forget myself.

Mau.—Leave you, Adrienne, leave you! I come to throw myself at your feet, to implore your pardon. When you whispered me to follow, I held back—I was restrained by

duty—by honor. I had received, or rather, I supposed that I had received—an important benefit from the Princess; I felt that I must not suffer the day to pass without telling her that I could not accept her gifts—that I did not love her—that my heart belonged to you—to you only, sweet Adrienne. Judge of my astonishment, when, during the interview that followed your performance, after I had uttered the words "I know all," she became pale and trembling—she is not a woman used to tremble—and, falling at my feet, declared that love alone had prompted her transgression—that she it was who caused me to be arrested. Yes, my sole object was to thank her for my deliverance, and I learned from her own lips that she alone had caused my arrest.

Adri.—Heavens!

Mau.—Words cannot express my delight; I had felt myself bound by every tie of gratitude to a woman I could not love; and now—now—I was free—free to abandon her—free to fly to you, my Adrienne, my true, my only love. Behold me! you will not repel me.

Adri.—Can I really place confidence in your words?

Mau.—By my honor, or by any oath that may be even more binding, I speak the truth; though to this hour I seem surrounded by mystery, for I am still ignorant who was the guardian genius who freed me from the dungeon in which I and all my hopes were buried. Can you—can you—enlighten me?

Adri.—No, no.

Mich.—Then I can—I can—it is herself.

Adri.—Silence! silence!

Mich.—On your account pledged her fortune, her diamonds, all she possessed—and more still.

Adri.—Not true—not true!

Mich.—It is true! She borrowed—she borrowed from one whom I do not know, but yet, though I do not know him, you may trust me; my desire is to see her happy, for I love her as a father should love his child. I have told the truth.

(Exit.)

Mau.—Then, Adrienne, it was you.

Adri.—Yes; I and my best friend, who has just left us. But no more of that; you accept—

Mau.—With one proviso, on condition that you accept my offer. At present I know not what my destiny may be; I know not whether I shall gain or lose the crown which the states of Courland have decreed me, but if I conquer, I solemnly protest that you shall be my duchess.

Adri.—I your wife—I?

Mau.—Yes, you; but for whom all my hopes would have been crushed. But you grow pale.

Adri.—It's nothing—nothing; so much happiness, after such deep despair, has proved too much for me.

Mau.—But your strength seems to fail you.

Adri.—A strange sensation has taken possession of me since—since I pressed the bouquet to my lips.

Mau.—What bouquet?

Adri.—The one which I took for a symbol of departure, but which was really the messenger of your return.

Mau.—What do you mean?

Adri.—The flowers which you sent me in this box.

Mau.—I? I sent you nothing. Where are these flowers?

Adri.—Burnt! I thought you had rejected both me and my trifling gift.

Mau.—But, Adrienne, my beloved Adrienne, you are really ill.

Adri.—No, no—not now. I am well here (touches heart), but there is a strange sensation here (touches head), very strange—a thousand fantastic objects seem to pass before me, without any order or connection. Where are we? My imagination seems to be wandering—I lose all power of controlling it. Ah! I know where I am—I am in the theatre; Maurice will be there—the house will be full—very full—but for me there will only be one object—Maurice! Still—still—applause is pleasant. Yes, with so much love, one may afford room for a little vanity. The play will soon begin, and they are anxious, no doubt, for they have been promised for so long a time, the *Psyche* of Corneille—for a very long time—

from the days when I first saw Maurice. There was an objection to its production, it is too old, it seems—*passe*. But I said "No, no;" and I had a reason: he—they little guess that reason—Maurice has never said to me, "I love you," and I have never said so much to him—the words spring from my heart to my lips, but I dare not utter them. Now in this piece—in this *Psyche*—there are certain lines that I can address to him before everybody, and nobody will find me out. It is a good thought, is it not?

Mau.—My love—my best love—return to yourself.

Adri.—What was that voice? Hush, hush! I must appear on the stage. What a splendid audience! how numerous—how brilliant! how my movements are watched by every glance; they are kind—very kind—very kind to love me in this way. But where is he? oh, yonder, in his box. Yes, yes; there is Maurice—he smiles on me.

Mau.—Adrienne, Adrienne! She does not see me—she does not hear me. Heavens! what can I do?

(Servant appears.)

Quick! seek help for your mistress—I dare not leave her side, my presence will perhaps calm her. Adrienne, my own Adrienne! hear me.

Adrienne.—Hush, hush! who is that? Some one enters his box, sits near him—she hides her face—but I know her—no earthly obstacle could prevent me from knowing that face; Maurice is speaking to her—he does not look at me any more—not any more.

Maurice.—Beloved girl, Maurice is near you; all this is delusion.

Adri.—Ha! their eyes meet, their hands are pressed together, and she says something to him; I know the words though I cannot hear them—she bids him to remain by her side—and he repels me. Ah! he little thinks that I am dying.

Mau.—Adrienne! for pity's sake.

Adri.—Pity!

Mau.—Has my voice lost its influence?

Adri.—What do you want?

Mau.—Listen to me for one single moment—look at me one single moment—at Maurice.

Adri.—Maurice? No, no! Maurice is not near me—he forgets me—go—go.

“Swear as you swore to me, but fancy not
Your former vows are by the gods forgot!
Abandon me—your faithless heart bestow
Upon another—go, false lover, go—
But tremble still.”

Ah, Maurice!

Mau.—Will no one come to her assistance? not a single friend?

(Enter Michonnet.)

Yes, thank heaven! here is one at last.

Michonnet.—What is this? They tell me Adrienne is in danger.

Maurice.—Adrienne is dying.

Adrienne.—Oh, agony! Who is near me? Ah, Maurice—and you too, Michonnet; it is very, very kind. My head is calm now, but here—here in my bosom—there is something like a consuming fire.

Mich.—Poisoned!

Mau.—No—you cannot suspect—

Mich.—With evidence like this. A rival.

Mau.—Silence, for heaven’s sake—silence!

Adri.—Ah! the pain increases. You who love me so much, help me—I do not wish to die. An hour ago I should have prayed for death as a blessing—but now I would live; I know that he loves me—he has said that I shall be his wife. Oh, heavenly powers! hear me—let me live some days—some few short days, near Maurice—I am so young—and life begins to appear so beautiful.

Mau.—This is too horrible—I shall grow distracted.

Adri.—No, no! I shall not live—every effort is in vain—I feel life ebbing away. Do not quit me, Maurice—I can see you now, but I shall not be able to see you much longer. Hold my hand, you will not long feel its pressure—there—

there—you will remember, will you not? Adieu, Maurice—adieu, Michonnet, my two, two only friends.

Mich.—Dead—dead!

Scribe as a Novelist.

Since Scribe was so popular as a dramatist, it is no wonder that publishers sought to enlist his services in the field of novel-writing, then so promising. To the journal called *Le Siècle* he was induced to contribute half a dozen romances. For one of these, *Piquillo Alliaga*, he is said to have received 60,000 francs. Yet, it was probably a bad bargain for the proprietor. Scribe's novels are tedious and have no real merit. Probably the very qualities which made him so accomplished in composing vaudevilles unfitted him for the construction and development of a long novel. He wrote with his eye fixed on the stage, every nook and cranny of which he had explored. But when everything had to be described and explained in order to stir a reader's imagination he sank and fell under the increased load.

Scribe was the organizer of the Dramatic Authors' Association, whose object was to secure better terms for their work from the managers of the theatre. It had considerable success in that way, but like other trade unions it brought in its train some evils. For one thing, the practical effect of its rules was to make it harder for young and obscure writers to get their plays acted. At the request of the Association Scribe once annulled a profitable contract, though he was aware that the request was prompted by jealousy rather than regard for general interest. To Scribe is attributed the invention

of the *claque*, the paid retinue of applauders who are a recognized part of the administration of French theatres.

Scribe's private life had its own romance. Long after he had become famous, he saw a young widow at his lawyer's office. She had come to beg the lawyer to renew certain notes against her husband's estate. She proved that she would be able to pay them later, but that if immediate payment were insisted on, she and her two sons would be ruined. The lawyer replied that his instructions were peremptory; the notes must be paid at maturity. Touched by her look of despair, Scribe made a sign to the lawyer to grant her request, and that he would pay the notes. In this way he became acquainted with Madame Boillay, and the first favorable impression was deepened by further knowledge. They were married; Scribe educated her sons and provided handsomely for them. His wife was an excellent helper in all his affairs, and was noted for her charity.

Scribe died in February, 1861, and his funeral at the Church of St. Roch was attended by the most eminent men of France, the Duke de Broglie, Cousin, Thiers, representatives of the State and municipal government and of all the theatres, poets, philosophers, statesmen and citizens generally. Vitet pronounced the eulogy on behalf of the Academy, and Maquet, noted as the chief collaborator of Dumas, on behalf of the authors. Scribe has been justly pronounced the most fruitful of vaudevillists, and in no other country than France could his merits have been accorded such a tribute of respect.

V.

Alexandre Dumas the Younger.

No product of the French theatre is more widely known and more generally regarded as completely characteristic of its origin than *La Dame aux Camélias*, Anglicized as *Camille*. It was the greatest theatrical success of the nineteenth century. Yet when it was first offered by the author to the experienced managers of Paris it was tossed from hand to hand and repeatedly refused; it was disliked and dreaded by actors, and repressed by censors jealous for public morality. One person alone, the genial actress Dejazet, approved the work and encouraged the young author. Three years passed from the time of its hasty composition until, as a distraction from the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III, this revolutionary play was allowed to appear at the Vaudeville theatre in February, 1852. From the hour that the curtain fell on the last act of the play Alexandre Dumas, son of the great romancist, held the foremost place among the dramatists of his time; Parisian managers competed eagerly for other plays from his pen; and the public warmly welcomed whatever he set before them on the stage. Yet the story was not new at

that first production. It was a dramatization of the author's own novel, bearing the same name. That novel was true to life, being based on the confessions made to him by a woman whose personality was but thinly veiled behind that of the heroine. Throughout the sins of her brief career she had preserved some sense of shame and craving after a better life. Her beauty, the fell disease that preyed upon her, the efforts of a nobleman to save her from her depraved existence on account of her likeness to his deceased daughter—were all facts in the career of the real woman. They had been told with skill and power in the novel, published in 1848. They were still more effectively shown in the drama, which was rejected until the profound change of the Second Empire required a change in social life. Even then the professional experts, most interested in determining the probable judgment of the public, united in condemning the play as too shocking to play-goers' taste, until the actual test reversed their verdict. In London, too, the English version of the play was prohibited long after the original had been performed hundreds of times in Paris. The limits of conventional propriety or indulgence vary not only in different countries, but in the same country at different periods, so that professional judges fail as often in their anticipations as do weather forecasters.

Boyhood and Youth.

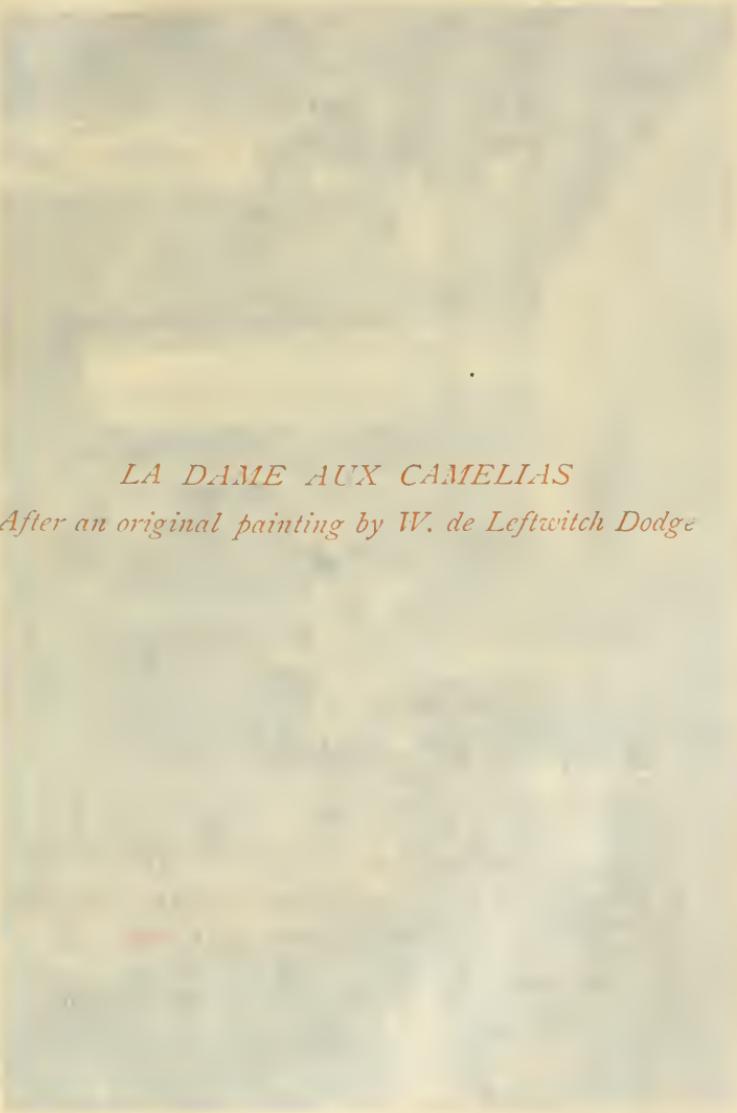
The Alexandre Dumas who thus won fame in a single night, though after years of weary waiting, was born in Paris on July 27th, 1824. He was the son of a seam-

stress and had no legal right to bear his father's name until he was six years old. In later life he described his mother as "a brave woman who toiled to rear her son," and he was always affectionate to her; when he acquired the means he surrounded her with luxury. At the time of the son's birth Dumas *père* was a clerk to the duke of Orleans, with a yearly salary of 1,200 francs, on which he had to support his mother. As soon as circumstances were improved by the success of his plays he formally acknowledged his son and thenceforth bore the expense of his support and education. At the schools he attended the boy suffered reproach for his illegitimate birth and was insulted by his comrades from morning till night. According to his own account, "Not a day passed that I did not have to fight with some one of them, and often with several at a time, for their cowardice was not solely of the heart. This torture, which I have depicted in *L'Affaire Clémenceau*, and of which I never spoke to my mother for fear of distressing her, lasted five or six years." The boy was then described as a pale, quiet child with large eyes and a head of yellow curls. He had a timid air as of one afraid of a coming blow. Some of his school-fellows he never forgave, though they afterward sought his friendship and were noted in literature. At another school the sensitive boy had better fortune and gained strength. He paid regular visits to his father, who was then in the midst of his bustling activity, surrounded with a crowd of helpers. Young Alexandre's education went as far as preparation for college, and he attended some college classes, but never entered the higher institution. After

leaving school he lived with his father and was petted and flattered by his father's friends. He was initiated into their mode of living, and yet, as he wrote afterward, "I did not take much delight in these pleasures. I observed more and studied more than I enjoyed in this turbulent life." In his period of dissipation he "believed he should always find money in the drawer of the table at which his dearest friend wrote for fifteen hours out of the twenty-four." But the illusion could not last forever. At the age of twenty-one his debts amounted to 50,000 francs. His prodigal father said to him: "You have debts. Do as I do; work, and you will pay them."

La Dame aux Camélias.

The young man put his father's advice in practice. His first work was *Le Bijou de la Reine*, a one-act play in verse, which shows no trace of his future ability. Thinking that novel-writing gave better chance of immediate income, he published some imitations of his father's romances in the *Journal des Demoiselles*. But his fond hopes were disappointed even when he had written *La Dame aux Camélias*. Though the novel had considerable success, yet his friends and even his experienced father, who had dared so much in the theatre, pronounced the subject unsuitable for the stage. The play was written in eight days, and shows little trace of its previous existence as a novel. But three years were to pass before it was put on the stage. Its performance was really due to the bloody inauguration of the Second Empire. The Duke de Morny, the illegiti-

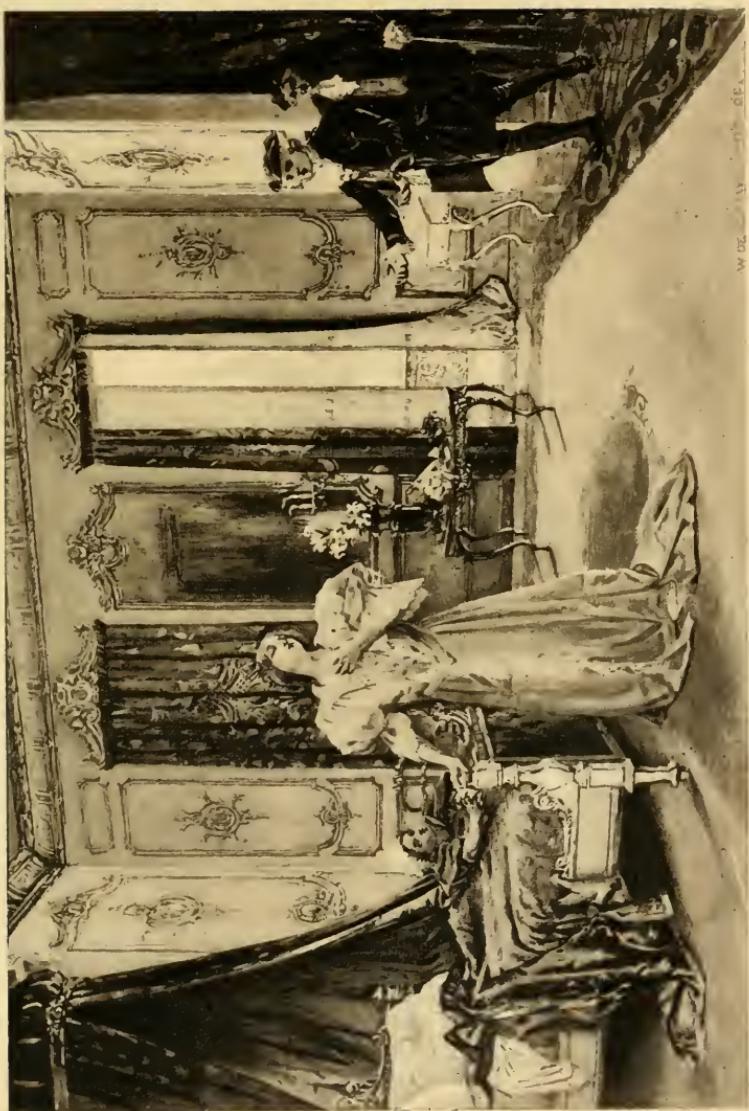


LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS

After an original painting by W. de Leftwich Dodge

*'Tis death alone can give me rest;
But let his tender mercy enshrine my name unhappy.
May he be spared the anguish that rends my soul
tormented.*

CAMILLE —DUMAS.



mate brother of Napoleon III, had been made a minister and he wished to divert the attention of the people of Paris from politics. For this purpose a theatrical sensation must be provided, and under his patronage the play, so long kept back, was brought out on February 2d, 1852, just two months after the *coup d'état*. His hopes were gratified; the new play ran for more than a hundred nights, and fully occupied the public mind. At each subsequent revival it has had equal success.

The author wrote later: "It was the play of *La Dame aux Camélias* that began to free me from the slavery of debt and of the society to which I owed both the debt and the success. I pledged myself not to fall back either into debt or into such society; and I kept my pledge at the risk of being called ungrateful." The experience of his youth furnished material for his future work, and the years of anxious suspense before his sudden triumph supplied the emotion.

To what was the success of this revolutionary play due? Simply to the fact that it represented an actual condition of society which had not hitherto been treated artistically. For a long time the French comedies had been conventional representations of a conventional society. Scribe was the great master of this style and knew exactly the limits within which it was permitted to move. *La Dame aux Camélias* burst those bonds and gave liberty to comedy to introduce actual conditions of life. The subject had been treated historically and with poetical elevation in Victor Hugo's *Marion Delorme*. It was now presented as a hitherto unexplored portion of contemporary life. It is full of the fervor of youth

and its excessive sentimentality commended it to all still susceptible to youthful emotion. It is a new form of the youthful exuberance and effervescence seen in Goethe's *Werther*, and like that it carries the popular mind by storm. Yet, in the interest of public morals, the play deserved the condemnation it had received in advance. Even though, as has been asserted, it is founded on actual facts, the play does incredible damage by depicting the self-sacrificing love of a courtesan without intimating that such anomaly is not the rule but the rare exception. It glazed over the hideous facts of the prostitute's life and surrounded them with a sentimental halo. Henceforth the vilest outcasts could console themselves as being represented by a popular heroine, for the part has been performed by all the celebrated actresses. Yet the play was no more immoral than many others that hold the boards to-day.

Dumas was at once beset by managers who were eager to exhibit his next play. But, unlike his father, he refused to undertake work rashly. A year passed before he gave at the Gymnase theatre his second play, *Diane de Lys*. It was also a dramatization of a former novel, well conceived and constructed, and yet too long and melancholy. While the public approved, they did not receive it with the rapture which attended its predecessor. The hero, Paul, is a projection of the author, yet he loses respect when he betrays the confidence of a friend who has introduced him to Diane. The heroine likewise sinks in estimation when her husband's sister begs her to guard the honor of the family whose name she bears, and she replies: "There is no danger of my

forgetting the name; I paid four millions for it." In the end the wronged husband slays the lover.

The Demi-Monde.

In another year Dumas had another play ready. This was presented at the Gymnase theatre in 1855. The name, which he invented for it, the *Demi-Monde*, has become familiar in many countries, but it is generally misapplied. By this title the author did not mean the class of courtesans, but women who live just beyond the border of respectable society, women who have fallen from grace, yet still maintain a stately show. The class comprises repudiated wives, mistresses and pretended widows. The play shows the struggles of a clever woman, Suzanne d'Ange, who has assumed the title of baroness, to escape from the half-world to which she belongs and enter the region of respectability. M. de Nanjac, a gallant, hot-headed young soldier, who has just returned from the war in Africa, falls in love with her, and is about to marry her. His friend, M. de Jalin, who understands the case, endeavors to prevent the marriage, and finally succeeds only by trapping the adventuress into a confession of love for himself. The play is the best of Dumas', the plot is well constructed, the dialogue brilliant and the characters finely contrasted. Beside the warm-hearted, impulsive Nanjac stands the cool, experienced Jalin, in whom may be recognized some traces of the author himself. Yet his stooping to trickery, even to accomplish a desirable end, must detract from full esteem, although Nanjac pronounces

him at the close “the most honest man I know.” But the chief personage of the play is still the redoubtable baroness whose schemes so nearly succeed in elevating her into the genuine world.

The Money Question.

Two years later Dumas offered another discussion of contemporary society in *La Question d'Argent*. The play is a favorite with the critics, yet, like many others which deal with the money question, it had little favor with the public. The central personage, Jean Giraud, is a self-made man, with unbounded skill in scheming, a firm believer in the power of money, and an unconscious rascal. He is a curious mixture of humility and self-conceit, awkwardness and impudence, a rough good nature and yet a rogue at heart, a restless speculator, already wealthy and yet never quite sure of his footing. The play is enlivened with wit and humor.

In 1858 Dumas boldly took up the question which most concerned himself in *Le Fils Naturel*. It has been pronounced by accomplished critics his masterpiece, and it is indeed a masterpiece of stagecraft. In the first act the illegitimate son gradually discovers the mystery of his birth and, when told his father's name, declares his intention to go to his father's house. When asked his object, he replies, “To see him, since I have never seen him.” In the second act the father refuses to give the son any satisfaction, but in the third the son becomes a man of importance, and the father offers the son the name which he had before refused. Now the son pre-

fers to keep his mother's name, having rendered it honorable by his own career. The public, though piqued by the subject, showed less interest in it than might have been expected.

The Prodigal Father.

The very name of his next play, *Le Père Prodigue*, excited great curiosity when it was presented in 1859. It seemed as though the young Alexandre was about to reveal family relations, if not family secrets. Yet, beyond the bad taste of the title under the circumstances, there was nothing in the play to condemn. The father's mode of life was already public property, and the circumstances in the play were so diverse as to refute any charge of filial disrespect. Count de Ravonnières and his son, Viscount André, reside together in a fine mansion in Paris and are devotedly attached to each other. The count is a gay man of the world who has unfortunately grown more careless of his estate as he has advanced in years. The son has taken charge of their money affairs, which are now in a dangerous state. The following scene from the first act shows the father about to take a slight lunch when the son enters.

André.—Ah! you are here.

Count.—Yes, I have been here for an hour; and moreover, a very agreeable person has been doing the honors of your establishment for me.

And.—It is a fine time to talk about agreeable persons! You are a very agreeable person—

Count.—What in the world is the matter with you?

And.—I am perfectly furious.

Count.—Against whom?

And.—Against you.

Count.—Why? What have I done?

And.—You have drawn on me at sight this draft here.

Count.—Oh, yes, I know very well what that means. It comes from London, to pay for the boat, you know.

And.—Yes, it comes from London, and it is to pay for the boat! That is no excuse. What about the boat, if you, please?

Count.—But, my dear fellow, they had no business to present it until the 15th.

And.—Well, isn't this the 15th?

Count.—I thought to-day was only the 14th! Have you paid it?

And.—Of course.

Count.—Ah! then I owe you six thousand francs. That's all there is to the matter.

And.—Yes, that's all! But you never told a word to me about it; I had no money in the house. I had to send to our man of business. May I beg of you in the future to be so good as to—

Count.—Poor boy! poor boy! Really, between ourselves (as it is a month since you have seen me and since you are really very fond of me) you would have done a great deal better to embrace me in meeting me again, than to say all these things to me.

And. (embracing his father heartily).—Oh, of course, they make no difference, when it comes to *that!*

Count.—Your second impulse is a very good one, but you ought to have begun with it. All the same, I must ask pardon for the inconvenience that I have caused you, my boy. (Takes some bank-notes from his pocket.) Here are your six thousand francs, and (holding out the remainder of the notes to André) since you need money, help yourself.

And.—Where in the world does that money come from?

Count.—Oh, it is some money I have received.

And.—There was none coming to you from anywhere!

Count.—There is always something to come to one, if he looks around carefully. But now let us talk of serious matters.

And.—Yes, certainly. Father, are you not disposed to settle down?

Count.—What do you mean by “settle down?”

And.—To save money, for one thing.

Count.—Save money! I should be charmed to do so; but I really do not see how we can do it. We certainly live as modestly as possible. This house belongs to us; we have only four saddle horses, four carriage horses, a couple of extra horses for evening service, two coachmen, two valets, two grooms, one cook. Why, we haven’t even a housekeeper.

And.—No. That’s the only thing we have not got.

Count.—We never have any visitors except men; we certainly are not extravagant as to the table. Look at me, here. I am lunching on two eggs and a glass of water. It seems to me that with our fortune—

And.—Our fortune? Would you like to know in what condition our fortune is?

Count.—You ought to know better than I, for you have had the running of affairs since you came of age.

And.—Well, then, I *do* know the expenses; and let me tell you that you have reckoned only those that are part of our life in Paris, and you have not said a syllable of those that belong to our country place.

Count.—Those that belong to our country place! Those are all just so much economy. We get everything from it, from eggs up to oxen.

And.—Yes, and even to wild boars, when it suits you to shoot one. Now be so good as to consider the place at Vilsac, which you call a matter of economy. First of all, it brings us in absolutely nothing.

Count.—It never has brought us in anything.

And.—It is mortgaged for two hundred thousand francs.

Count.—That happened when I was young.

And.—Are you under the impression that there comes a time when mortgages wear themselves out? I wish they did. But I am afraid you deceive yourself; and in the meantime, you pay every year interest on the mortgage. Furthermore, at Vilsac—

Count.—Where, remember, we spend September, October, November, all of which is positively an economy.

And.—Now, further, as to Vilsac, this country place where we pass September, October and November—all of which is positively an economy—the proof of its being an economy is that here we are in the middle of September, and we are just setting out for Dieppe.

Count.—For once only, as it happens. However, we will have to go down to Vilsac by the end of the month, for I have asked those fellows to come down there for the shooting.

And.—Yes, in this economical country place, where you have asked all those gentlemen to come down for the shooting, at the end of the month—

Count.—Really one would be bored to death without that!

And.—In this same economical establishment, I say, you have twelve keepers.

Count.—Quite true; but it is one of the best preserves in France, and really, there are so many poachers—

And.—You have two masters of hounds, and ten horses—in short, a whole hunting establishment. I need not speak of the damages that you pay year after year, if only for the rabbits that you kill.

Count.—The fact is, there are thousands of rabbits; but shooting rabbits is such fun!

And.—Add to that the entertainments that it occurs to you to give every now and then, with fireworks and so on, during the evening.

Count.—Oh, yes, but that pleases all the peasants of the neighborhood, who adore me; between ourselves, it is rather—Oh, my dear boy! if I had only been rich, what fine things I would have done! In France, people do not know how to spend money. In Russia, it is quite another matter! Now, there you have people who understand how to give entertain-

ment. But then what can one do with two hundred thousand livres for an income?

And.—Father, one can do exactly what you have done—one can ruin himself.

Count.—What! ruin himself?

And.—Yes. When my mother died your personal fortune brought you, as you say, an income of two hundred thousand livres; and the money which my mother left to me, of which you have had the use until I came of age, amounted to a hundred and twenty thousand livres.

Count.—I certainly have made an accounting to you in the matter.

And.—A perfectly exact one, only in doing so you have seriously impaired your own capital.

Count.—Why did you not say that to me at the time?

And.—Because I, too—I was thinking of nothing but spending money. I did then just what I see you doing. I took life exactly as you had taught me to take it.

Count.—André, I hope that is not a reproach.

And.—God bless me, no.

Count.—Then I will explain to you why I brought you up—

And.—Not worth while, my dear father. There is no good in going back to that, and I know quite well—

Count.—On the contrary, you know nothing at all about the matter, and you will please allow me to speak. It will be a consolation. If I have brought you up after a certain manner, it is just because I myself suffer from a different kind of education. I was brought up very severely, so that at twenty-two years I knew nothing of life. I was born with a constitution like iron. I went hunting every day for whole months, on foot or on horseback. I ate my meals like an ogre. I rode every sort of a horse, and I was a swordsman like St. George himself. As for other things, my dear fellow, there was no use dreaming about them: I had not a crown in my pocket. One day my father asked me if I was willing to marry, and I cried out, “Oh, yes, yes!” with such an explosion that my father himself could not help laughing.

I was presented to a young girl, virtuous and beautiful; and I fell in love with her with a passion which at first fairly frightened the delicate and timid creature. Such was your mother, my dear André, and to her I owe the two happiest years of my life. It is true that I owe to her also my greatest grief, for at the end of those two years she died. At twenty-four years I found myself rich, a widower, free to do what I pleased, and thrown—with a child a year old—into the midst of this world called Paris, of which I knew nothing whatever. Ought I to have condemned you to the sort of life that I had led at Vilsac, and which had been for me so often an intolerable bore? No, I obeyed my real nature. I gave you my qualities and my shortcomings, without reckoning closely in the matter; I have sought in your case your affection rather than your obedience or your respect. It is true, I have never taught you economy, but then I did not know anything about that myself. To have everything in common between us, one heart and one purse, to be able to give each other everything and say everything to each other—that has been our motto. We have lost, it seems, some hundreds of thousands of francs; but we have gained this—that either of us will be ready at any moment to die for the other, and that is a very important matter between a father and a son. All the rest is not worth the trouble that one takes to reason about it. Don't you think I am right?

And.—All that is true, my dear father! and I am just as much attached to you as you are to me. Far be it from me to reproach you; but now in my turn I want to make a confession to you. You were born at a time when all France was in a fever, and when each individual, as well as the great mass of the people, seemed to try to spend by every possible means a superabundance of vitality. Urged toward active life by nature, by curiosity, by temperament, you have cared for things that were worth caring for—for them only; for enjoying yourself, for hunting, for fine horses, for the artist world, for people of rank and distinction. But I, on the other hand, like almost all my generation, have been brought in contact with a fashionable world from the time I began life. Born in an epoch of lassitude and transition—I led for a while this life by mere imitation in laziness. * * * * *

It is a kind of existence that no longer amuses me, and moreover, I can tell you that it never did amuse me. So now, now that you have got a serious explanation of affairs, let us reach a real irrevocable determination of them. Are you willing to let me arrange your life for you in the future exactly as I would wish to arrange my own life? Are you willing to have confidence in me, and after having brought me up in your way, are you willing that in turn, while there is still time for it, I should—bring you up in mine?

Count.—Well, yes. Go on.

And.—Very well. Severe diseases require strong remedies. We will keep Vilsac for you and find money somehow to pay off the mortgage.

Count.—How?

And.—That's my business. But you must send away the two beaters and six of the keepers. And only four horses can be kept. No more entertainments are to be given, no more fireworks. You will entertain only two or three intimate friends now and then—if we can find as many as that among the crowd that are about us nowadays—and you will stay at Vilsac seven or eight months of the year.

Count.—Alone?

And.—Wait a little. This house must be sold. We must turn off these servants, who are just so many thieves; and we will keep at Paris only a very modest stopping place.

Count.—Will you kindly allow me to get my breath?

And.—Don't stir, or my surgical operation will not be successful. Now that your debts are paid, there will be left you forty thousand livres income, and as much for me—no more. And with all that, for three or four years you will not have the capital at your disposal.

Count.—Heavens, what a smash!

And.—Are you willing to accept my scheme?

Count.—I see I must.

And.—Very well, then; sign these papers!

Count.—What are they?

And.—They are papers which I have just got from the

notary, expecting you to sign them while at Dieppe and send them to me, but since you are here—

Count (signs).—Since I am here, I may as well sign at once. You are quite right. There you are.

And.—Very well; now, according to my notions, if you are left to yourself, you will slip back into the same errors as in the past—

Count.—What else are you going to do?

And.—Guess.

Count.—You are going to forbid—

And.—Are you out of your senses? I am going to marry you off.

Count.—Marry me off! And how about yourself?

And.—I shall get married myself—afterward. You must begin as an example.

Count.—Some one told you the very thing I have had in mind.

And.—Nobody has told me anything.

Count.—Explain yourself. Have you, all by yourself, had this idea of marriage?

And.—I, myself.

Count.—Don't deny, then, the sympathy between us!

And.—How?

Count.—It exists (putting his arms around his son.) There, embrace me!

And.—And you accept?

Count.—As if I would do anything else!

But it is only after this reversal in the natural order of things that the real action of the play begins. The complications are too involved to be detailed here. Suffice it to say that in the fourth act the generous prodigal father sacrifices himself to save his son's life. That the

piece was a decided success need hardly be said; for apart from its merit, its sprightliness of dialogue, it attracted by sheer force of curiosity.

Plays on the Woman Question.

The next play, *L'Ami des Femmes*, produced in 1864, did not deserve success, and did not obtain it. It was the first of his studies of the woman question. Turning to novel-writing, he published in 1866 *L'Affaire Clémenceau*, which had a depraved heroine whom the husband slays. It is a vivid picture of real life as he saw it in his days of dissipation. This, though his best work after *La Dame aux Camélias*, had not altogether such effect as the author hoped. It was dramatized in 1887, but not by Dumas himself. He left the task to D'Artois. On the stage it obtained the success for which he had looked.

In 1865 Dumas had a singular experience with an old friend of his father, Émile de Girardin. The latter, eminent as a journalist, wrote a play and asked the younger Dumas to fit it for the stage. He altered it and called it *Le Supplice d'une Femme*. But Girardin resented the alterations and refused to acknowledge the authorship. However, when it was acted, this anonymous three-act play scored a success, probably owing to the rapidity of its action. Henceforth Dumas shortened his pieces. In his *Idées de Madame Aubray* he pleaded for the rehabilitation of the woman who has fallen once through ignorance. The next play, *Une Visite des Noces*, had but one act, and its only important effect was

to produce an explosion of public sentiment against its offensive indecency.

It was the first of a series of plays which Dumas had contracted to write for the Gymnase theatre on the woman-question from a social point of view, discussing the relations of woman to home, society and morality. The others were *La Princesse Georges*, *La Femme de Claude* and *Monsieur Alphonse*. While they treated the question according to various circumstances, they did not give a uniform answer. In some the author inclined to forgiveness of the erring wife, in others he just as strongly insisted on her punishment. In the critical pamphlet on the subject, published in 1872 under the title *L'Homme-Femme*, he returned to the subject of women who are moved wholly by animal wants and instincts, and justified the husband who removes such a monster from the world. He summed up his conclusion in the notable phrase, “*Tue-la*”—“Kill her.” But he was not always consistent with himself, and though he did much preaching in these sociological plays, and in the elaborate prefaces to them, it is difficult to decide what were his final views.

Dumas' Last Plays.

Dumas next play, the *Princesse de Bagdad*, in February, 1881, was of an altogether different kind. It was a revival of his father's immoral *Antony* with the scene laid in a remote capital where ordinary rules of conduct and manners do not apply. Besides the plays mentioned, Dumas generously assisted other writers in

various pieces, often without obtaining public credit, except so far as critics could detect his style. He claimed for the theatre a right to discuss social questions in the interest of morality, and had a public controversy with a clerical opponent about it. Yet he warned parents not to take their daughters to the theatre. He even uttered the paradox that he respected the maiden too much to bid her to his plays, and he respected his art too much to write for maidens. Each separate production of his pen seems clear and thoroughly sincere. But the combination of them produces a hopeless muddle. With all his claims for his profession, he forgot that logical consistency was essential to the influence of one who professes to use the stage as a pulpit.

After 1887 Dumas gave nothing to the stage. Though he had promised and was said to have completed a play in five acts, he never submitted it to the manager of the Comédie Française, and finally he declared he would not allow it to be performed after his death. He saw his strength failing and the end approaching, and acknowledged that he was vanquished. He died at Marly, surrounded by his family, on November 28th, 1895. After his death the whole of Paris mourned his loss. Great as was the name which he had inherited, it was felt that he had given it increased lustre. In personal character, during most of his career, he seemed to be at an opposite pole from his father. He was regular in all his habits, thrifty and frugal, yet most generous and obliging. His family life was a model of virtue. His wife was a Russian princess, and his two daughters are said to have

inherited his wit and intellect. He was elected to the French Academy in 1874, and in his speech on admission declared that he felt that the honor was conferred on him only because his father was not alive to receive it. He endeavored, therefore, to call up his father's spirit to share the tribute.

VI.

Sardou and Augier.

Among the French dramatists of the close of the nineteenth century none was more popular than Victorien Sardou. He was the successor of Scribe in method and in adapting his work to the changing currents of public opinion. He took advantage of the prominent questions of the day, and in dialogue, if not in plot, offered the public something on the subjects then occupying general attention. He thus carried the practice of the journalist into the theatre. He has been called a barometer dramatist, since his work rises and falls according to the changes of the political and social atmosphere about him. Yet he has not always inclined to the popular view. He has dared to differ with the multitude, and some of his plays have been driven from the stage by political opposition. In nearly all his works he has maintained what the French consider a high moral tone. He has avoided as much as possible such plots as formed the staple of French comedy in the days of Scribe. He prefers to deal with honest love rather than adultery. Hence not only have his plays gained esteem in their native city but translations and adaptations of them

have been acted in all parts of the English-speaking world.

Sardou.

Victorien Sardou was born in Paris on the 7th of September, 1831. His father was a professor of classics and wrote some elementary text-books. The son studied medicine, and afterwards history; then, obliged to make his own way, taught various branches in schools, wrote for newspapers, dictionaries and reviews. His first play, a three-act comedy in verse, called *Taverne des Étudiants*, failed when it was performed at the Odéon on April 1st, 1854. Then Victorien, having missed in his play, turned to story-writing. In 1858 his marriage with Mdlle. de Brécourt gave him access to the actress Dejazet, for whom he wrote a play in collaboration with her friend, Vanderbuch. She opened a theatre of her own in 1859 with this play, *Premières Armes de Figaro*, in which she took the part of the young Figaro. It proved a great success and Sardou composed new plays for her. Having given special attention to the French Revolution, he utilized its history in *M. Garet*. The writing of these dramas for a special actor cultivated his dramatic faculty and gave him exact knowledge of the requirements of the modern theatre.

Within five years the industrious playwright turned out a score of plays, ranging from farce to drama. Most of them failed, but the *Pattes de Mouche* and *Nos Intimes* proved successful, and have since maintained their place on the stage. They may hardly be recognized in the English titles of their adaptations, *A Scrap of Paper*

and *Friends or Foes*. Afterward Sardou was more careful in his work, and in the later years of the Empire produced but one play yearly. In his *Famille Benoiton* in 1865 he satirized the extravagance and demoralization of Parisian society. In 1867 he exposed in like manner the conditions of provincial life in *Nos Bons Villageois*. The success of these pieces encouraged him in his hits at contemporary politics. A much more creditable specimen of his skill was furnished in the historical drama *Patrie* in 1869. The downfall of the Empire and the siege of Paris brought to an abrupt termination work for the theatres. The playwright was a special sufferer, for his villa on the Seine was destroyed during the rule of the Commune.

Rabagas and Uncle Sam.

In 1872 when order was restored Sardou sought to retaliate by attacking Gambetta in his violent *Rabagas*, a satirical comedy in the style of Aristophanes. *Rabagas* is a political lawyer using statecraft to win fame and fortune. Its representation provoked serious disturbances in the provinces, as well as at Paris. Next Sardou found subject for ridicule in American manners and customs, of which he knew hardly anything. It was inspired by the foolish belief that the American people had given moral aid to the Germans in their invasion of France. The censors forbade this *L'Oncle Sam* as insulting to a friendly nation. But an enterprising manager brought it out in New York in March, 1873, where its production caused more amazement than anger. It

seemed to show the dramatist's hopeless ignorance of what he was treating. Meanwhile, *Andrea*, a play already written for an American actress, was substituted in Paris before the censors withdrew their prohibition of *L'Oncle Sam*. When at last it did appear, this strange travesty of American life with its mixture of whites and blacks, met little favor. It seems that it was not entirely his own, but the novelist who sued him for a share in the profits, on the ground that the plot was taken from his story, lost his case.

Member of the Academy.

In 1877 Sardou returned to his better style with *Dora*, which has since been modified in an English version called *Diplomacy*. It is notable among French plays for its moral purity. In that year he was chosen a member of the French Academy, and his reception was in the following May. His conservative tendencies in politics recommended him to that body, but his strange attitude toward religion in his next play must have amazed them. In this *Daniel Rochat* the intention was to exhibit the supposed effect of the conflict between religion and science on family life. Rochat, an atheist and a politician, meets in Switzerland two American girls travelling alone. He falls in love with the elder, Léa, proposes and is accepted; in the second act they are married by a civil ceremony; in the third she insists on a religious ceremony, which he refuses; in the fourth he tries in vain to seduce her from her religious faith; in the fifth they agree to separate and sign an applica-

tion for divorce. Three acts are occupied with arguments until the whole becomes wearisome, and on review ridiculously trifling. Sardou was endeavoring to make a problem play, but failed to perceive the kernel of the problem, the moral effect of the difference of religious belief between husband and wife. Strange to say, his next play was an indecent farce called *Divorçons*. It is partly on account of this piece that he is accused of a lack of all moral principle.

In 1882 Sardou wrote for Sarah Bernhardt the historical play *Fedora*, and two years later followed this with *Theodora*, the wife of the emperor Justinian, the private chronicles of whose court are full of scandal. These spectacular plays of distant times have been warmly greeted in all parts of the world.

Thermidor.

In January, 1891, Sardou's *Thermidor* produced a great public commotion and was suppressed by the authorities. The author declared that his object was to present Robespierre and the Reign of Terror in their true character, but the Republicans insisted that it was really a political attack on the government. The first act gave a thrilling description of Paris under the Terror. In the second, the heroine Palienne, overcome by the impassioned eloquence of her lover Martial, is about to follow him, when she hears her sister nuns singing hymns on their way to the scaffold, and is thus reminded of the sanctity of the vows which she had taken and the guilt of breaking them. In the last act

the victims are seen departing from the prison of the Conciergerie and entering the carts which carry them to the guillotine, while the mob jeers at them.

Sardou's Comedies.

Sardou's comedies are composed rapidly, but show complete knowledge of theatrical requirements. He reproduces on the stage vividly the movements of the world around him. He does not hesitate to appropriate scenes and situations already employed by others. Whatever he has borrowed has been so incorporated with his own work as to be felt to be in an appropriate place. Therefore, though critics have taken pains to point out his borrowings, they have not in the least affected his popularity.

As has already been stated, his plays in general are marked by a moral tone. He never panders to vice nor paints it seductively. The customs and traditions of French society make love not the forerunner but a consequent of marriage. The French method of bringing up girls in seclusion and marrying them off without their permission obliges the dramatist to seek the occasion of the rise and growth of passion after marriage. The dramatists generally accept this custom and write their plays according to its requirements. Sardou is conspicuous for his efforts to confine the interest of his plays to the honest love of man and woman. A favorite character in them is the *ingénue*, the frankly innocent young girl who compels the respect and wins the confidence of all she meets. To women he assigns the best

part in his plays—that of common-sense, tenderness and self-sacrifice. His rapidity of action and brilliance of dialogue go far to compensate for thinness, not to say rapidity in the passages that are intended to be sentimental. His *Madame Sans-Gêne*, turning on the early love of Marshal Lefebre, has long been a favorite comedy on the American stage.

Sardou's Method of Construction.

Sardou has analyzed his own method in composing a play, which he declares is invariable. He compares its beginning to an algebraic problem from which an unknown quantity is to be discovered, only here the problem is philosophical. Thus in his *Patrie* the question was, "What is the greatest sacrifice a man can make for love of country?" This being answered, the piece follows as a matter of course. In *Haine* the problem was, "In what circumstances will the inborn charity of woman show itself in the most striking manner?" But this statement is incredible, unless taken with considerable allowance. He meant to say that he started with a situation, then formed characters to suit that situation and continued to heighten the effect until the entire play contributes to the power and pathos of this situation.

The hero in *Haine* is the patriot leader of a revolt, who loves his wife next to his country. On the very eve of the rising against the oppressor the leader discovers that his wife is in love with his lieutenant, whose services are absolutely necessary to secure victory. In

this dilemma the patriot gives up his private vengeance and joins with the lover in fighting for his country.

Criticism on Sardou.

When Sardou was received into the Academy, Charles Blanc, in reply to his oration, indulged, as is customary, in polite criticism of his methods. One of these points was his use of small means to achieve great effects. In particular a letter is often used happily and in many ways; "every part of the letter has some importance, the envelope, the seal, the wax, the postage stamp, the tint of the paper, even the perfume arising from it, not to speak of the contents and the hand-writing—any one of these may become irrefutable evidence to betray lovers, to denounce villains, to warn the jealous."

Sardou is skillful in the management of situations and working them out; the characters are made to fit it, and the dialogue is sufficient to display it. Yet the characters are not real and living; they are puppets, moved mechanically to suit the play, or merely mouthpieces for the author's wit. They do not rule the events but are moved and governed by them.

Sardou's endeavor to adapt himself and his work to the temper of the time causes a double construction in many of his plays; the first half is a satirical comedy in which a question of the day is treated; the second half is a melodramatic working up of the elements so far presented so as to form a strong situation and lead to an effective conclusion.

What rank will finally be awarded to Sardou? He has held for more than a generation a place resembling that of Scribe—the popular purveyor of regular dramatic entertainment. He had great talents for the purpose and used them cleverly, but he did not rise far above the ordinary level. He did not stir the blood or move the heart. He was content to entertain the world for a day, and sooner or later his works will pass from the stage.

Emile Augier.

Of the three chief dramatists of France in the middle part of the nineteenth century, the best, though not the most popular, was Augier. His dramatic career extended from 1844 to 1878, in which time he wrote but twenty-seven plays, a number which seems singularly small for a younger contemporary of Scribe and the elder Dumas, and ridiculously small for a successful writer who confined himself to play-writing. But the practice and example of his predecessors could not swerve Augier from the even tenor of his way. He wrote when he had some worthy idea to present to the public, and he took the time necessary to dress and elaborate the idea. Yet while he attained an exalted position in the estimation of the best judges, he did not win the affection of the French people, and outside of France he has remained almost unknown. His work was too refined, too intellectual for the multitude; it appeals to the select few, and strictly to the select few of France.

Emile Augier was born at Valence on the 17th of

September, 1820. Through his mother he could trace his descent from Eustache de St. Pierre, who won fame by his stubborn resistance to Edward III in the siege of Calais in 1347. He received a good education and studied for admission to the bar. But like many another law student, he gave much time to lighter literature. At the age of twenty-four he wrote a play in verse, *La Ciguë*, which was refused at the Théâtre Français, but accepted at the Odéon, where it had considerable success. It was a two-act comedy of antique life and received its name from the bowl of hemlock which the hero determined to take. It is a well-wrought exhibition of selfish greed, treated with singular irony. It so happened at that time that there was a lull in the long and hard-fought battle between the Romanticists and the Classicists. Most play-goers and critics were weary of the strife, and hoped for a truce or a compromise. Some thought they had found a signal of this consummation devoutly wished in *Lucrèce*, a tragedy by François Ponsard, a classic tale set off with romantic embellishment. This poet was hailed as the founder of a new dramatic school—the school of common-sense—the happy *media via*, combining the merits of the two contending styles, without the faults of either. The *Ciguë* now came forward to meet a ready welcome as the second example of this new manner. Ponsard and Augier were personal friends, but neither made any pretensions to founding a school, or even a club. Those who so warmly applauded the new plays and discovered in them new principles or methods, acted on their own judgment; yet they may have had some justification

for their opinion. *Ciguë* is a fine example of a moderate, correct play, free from the stereotyped rigidity of the later classic school and from the wild extravagance of the early Romanticists.

Gabrielle.

Encouraged by the success of his first venture, Augier made another in the next year, but had to wait for his next triumph till 1848, when it came with the metrical comedy *Aventurière*. A still greater followed with *Gabrielle* in 1849. The latter sounded a new note well suited to the return of the golden age of innocence which some hopeful enthusiast saw in the inauguration of the short-lived Republic. The play represents a young husband really devoted to his wife and children, yet so absorbed in earnest daily labor to secure their future that he does not observe or gratify his wife's sentimental longings. But a professed friend of the family falls in love with her and seems likely to satisfy her restless feeling. Before the rift has gone too far, the husband awakes to the reality of the situation; but giving no sign of suspicion, he appeals to the lover to help him to recover his wife's affection. Afterward bringing both together, he boldly seizes an opportunity to set forth the deplorable consequences of a wrong step. Such is the effect of his warning that, when the two are left alone, the wife dismisses the lover and he quietly submits to the sentence. After his departure the wife, beginning to recognize the true worth of her husband, confesses to him her fault, while he chivalrously admits

his own in his thoughtless neglect, and asks for the return of her love. Overcome by his unswerving devotion, she exclaims passionately: "O father! O poet! I love thee!"

This healthy play fastened the sympathy of the audience on the wronged husband and not on the treacherous lover, as had become the fashion. Strong was the contrast between such a domestic play and the seductive pictures of adultery which Scribe and Dumas, and their host of collaborators, offered to the same public. The younger Dumas recorded a true view of the case when in his retrospect of the drama he wrote: "There was a need of hearing something which had common-sense, and which should lift up, encourage or console mankind, not so egotistic or foolish as Scribe declares it. . . . A writer robust, loyal and keen presented himself, and *Gabrielle*, with its simple and touching story, with its fine, noble language, was the first revolt against the conventional comedy." But this righteous verdict condemns not only Scribe but much of the work of the elder Dumas, and, indeed, of the whole Romantic school. It exposed by contrast the false ideas of sentimentality which Romanticism had diffused, and the strenuous exalting of self-will, which made the promptings of passion superior to the restraints of duty and conscience. Justly did the French Academy bestow on him the prize.

Le Gendre de M. Poitier.

For about ten years Augier wrote his comedies in verse, according to French tradition. When, in 1853,

he turned to prose, in *Pierre de Touche*, he had Jules Sandeau as a collaborator, and thereafter usually joined with others in dramatic work. His most excellent play is the *Gendre de M. Poirier*, in which Sandeau again assisted. It is a simple, direct story in four acts, whose interest lies not in external circumstances, but in the conflict of well-marked characters, and these characters are living examples of contemporary society, though kindred types may be found in the literature of all ages. M. Poirier is a wealthy man of the bourgeois class; his son-in-law is the marquis de Presles, a poor young nobleman of high rank. Between the two, with their different training and hostile notions, the unfortunate daughter and wife suffers acutely until her own character is developed in unexpected directions by the pressure of her woes. Within a few months of their marriage the careless husband twice gets into difficulties, from which the plebeian wife saves his patrician honor. His vice is shown without pretense of concealment or excuse. The play reveals faithfully the suffering which pursuit of sinful pleasure brings on the innocent. The marquis has a chance of reconciliation with an adversary at the expense of his honor, but in a most pathetic scene his wife, with unexpected force of character, insists on his going forth to fight for his honor. The play is thoroughly objective; the authors present the case with judicial impartiality, favoring neither side in statement of the case. The whole is pervaded with healthy humor, and the characters reveal themselves in their response to the changing circumstances. While the work is formally attributed to two authors,

the chief merit of the piece is always assigned to Augier, yet Sandeau may have contributed to its more graceful passages.

Prose Comedies.

Gabrielle gave a public expression to the hope of earnest patriots for the preservation of domestic virtue as essential to the welfare of the Republic. On the other hand the first sensational play of the younger Dumas under the Empire—the brilliant *Dame aux Camélias*—inaugurated a new and dangerous view of the social problem. Here there was no longer a picture of passionate adultery, as in *Antony* and its congeners, but of deliberate prostitution. *Gabrielle* had been a keen thrust at the easy morality of Scribe's comedies, which sought merely to amuse, and never to reform the world as it was and as it chose to be. But here was a presentation of vice which made it almost another form of virtue. Augier, full of love for the family and home, resented the insidious attack on that domestic virtue which he had pictured so well and commended to his fellow-men. But the spirit of this new work of Dumas gained full possession of the stage. The *Dame aux Camélias* was followed by a shoal of imitations. In his *Mariage d'Olympe* Augier met the daring enemy on his own ground. Dispelling the glamour which Dumas has cast around the courtesan, Augier revealed her as she is, guilty and repulsive. In this play the courtesan, Olympe, tricks a young man of high birth into marriage and manages to get herself accepted by his family. But after being fairly installed in an honorable place

she has a longing to return to her dissolute life. When a chance occurs she wantonly sells herself to an applicant. Her husband's grandfather confronts her with evidence of her vileness, and she retorts by threatening to publish a scandal about an innocent girl, the youngest of his noble family. Disdaining to buy the wretch off, the marquis shoots her like a dog. It may have been, and probably was, that pistol-shot which killed the play at the time it was first presented. Such a shock was then too severe for the nerves of the play-goers. But in later years this method of solving a crucial problem became common, and the *Mariage d'Olympe* was several times revived to obtain a more favorable, yet not prolonged, reception.

But Augier, undismayed by the failure of his first attempt to recall the people from their mad rush to social ruin, tried the task again and more boldly in the *Lionnes Pauvres*, in which he had the collaboration of Foussier. Such was the vigor of this play in revealing the hideousness of vice that the French censors, in their professional alarm for the virtue of the people, wished the author to make it more moral, and one sagely suggested that the vicious woman might have an attack of small-pox as a natural consequence of her perversity. The *Lionnes Pauvres* concerns two households, in one of which the wife finds she has lost her husband's affection, while in the other the husband discovers his dis-honor. The play, however, did not obtain favor with the public, either when first presented in 1858 or when revived in 1867. George H. Lewes said of it in the latter year: "The comedy—or shall I not rather call it

tragedy?—was terribly affecting. The authors have shown what comedy may be, should be. They have boldly laid bare one of the hideous sores of social life, and painted the consequence of the present rage for dress and luxury which is rapidly demoralizing the middle classes of Europe."

Between these two warning plays in prose Augier had presented another in verse—*La Jeunesse*. It related to another flagrant evil of modern society—the greed for money and its ruinous effect. Still another comedy in verse is *Paul Forestier*, a highly impassioned play in which, for once, Augier somewhat sacrifices probabilities in order to punish vice and reward virtue. Augier's other comedies in prose were in the satiric vein, and include *Les Effrontés*, in 1861; *Fils de Giboyer*, 1862; *Contagion*, 1866, and *Lions et Renards*, 1869. The first attacked swindling speculators and the social prominence given to wealth, however dishonorably acquired. In it appeared Giboyer, a Bohemian of the press, and the Marquis d'Auberive, a fine type of the old nobility. Having been received with favor, the same characters were brought in again in the *Fils de Giboyer*. But suddenly an outcry arose against this second play, which exposed clerical intrigue in politics. A fierce war raged in the newspapers. Pamphlets were issued denouncing the modern Aristophanes, who was attacking what was most sacred in the institutions of society, and even inserting libels in his plays.

Far from dismaying him, these invectives stimulated Augier to new efforts in the same general direction—exposing the demoralization of society. In *Contagion*

the attack was on the prevalence of skepticism, the loss of faith in human progress, and the wanton scoffing at things hitherto held sacred. Baron d'Estrigand is a keen-witted rascal, never at a loss for schemes, and readily triumphing over his victims. In *Lions et Renards*, the rascally Baron d'Estrigand appears again and has a fierce struggle with St. Agathe for a fortune, which, however, escapes them both. St. Agathe had been mentioned in *Contagion*, but was not there presented on the stage. He is one who has renounced the world and entered a religious order. To its cause he devotes all his powers and is perfectly content to remain unknown. The never-ending conflict between the world and the church in France for the possession of power is here shown in the persons of D'Estrigand and St. Agathe. In the end a surprising victory is won by the church, for D'Estrigand forsakes the world and becomes a Jesuit under the eyes of St. Agathe. Such changes, however unexpected, are not without actual example in France of the present day, so that here Augier exhibits, like Hamlet's players, "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time." And not in this particular alone, but throughout the whole series, he gave pictures which should have revealed French society to itself, laid bare the ulcers which were sapping its life, and pointed out the pressing need of the surgeon's knife. Some minor plays, interspersed with these more important satirical comedies, were not unworthy of his reputation, but need not be mentioned here. In all his plays Augier opposed common sense to the extravagances of the Romantic school, though too much

of a moralist to follow the methods of the realists. His best work, or at least the one that brought him most fame, was *L'Aventurière*, which long kept possession of the stage.

The Fall of the Empire.

In 1870 the gilded empire, which shone so brilliantly in the eyes of the world, collapsed as suddenly as it had arisen. The downfall brought terrible disaster to France, and especially Paris. For a time the players were struck dumb, and the dramatist's occupation was gone. But when order was restored after the horrors of the Commune, fickle Parisians, resuming their wonted habit, looked to the theatre not merely for diversion, but for light and direction. As a dramatist who rose to the height of the rare opportunity thus presented, Augier again deserves honorable mention. In the day of his country's need he offered no trivial farce or merely showy spectacle, but a stirring, patriotic play. Sardou, whose sympathies were never fully with the Republic, had brought out his ill-judged and reactionary *Rabagas*, satirizing the Republican leaders. Augier came to the rescue of his country with his *Jean de Thommeray*, a faithful picture showing the real causes of the demoralization and defeat, and also in the person of the hero a suggestion of the proper mode of recovery. What he had formerly tried to do for the home he now essayed for the country. His effort, no doubt, helped to prolong the existence of the ever-precarious Republic. The prescription attested the physician's skill, even if it was not the direct means of curing the

patient, for in this play Augier treated his country as an individual, and the task was too great for him.

In 1876 Augier presented another domestic drama, *Madame Caverlet*, in which he suggests divorce as a remedy for some social evils. In 1877 he joined with Labiche in the *Prix Martin*, but declared that the chief credit belonged to his collaborator. In 1878 he obtained a final success with *Fourchambault*, which was another plea for the home and its sanctities. With this new triumph the honored victor retired from the stage. For more than ten years he lived in retirement. He died in his house at Croisy in October, 1899.

Criticism of Augier.

Augier was undoubtedly the most moral of recent French playwrights. It may excite wonder, therefore, that his plays are not better known in England and America. But when managers go abroad for venison, they seek that which is high rather than that which is wholesome. The latter kind can be obtained at home in sufficient abundance. The French dressing, however choice, does not help it. Augier always instinctively ranged himself on the side of virtue, whether in the home, in society, or in political affairs. Nor was his support merely passive; he boldly invaded the enemy's territory and there won repeated triumphs. While he worked sometimes in collaboration with others, his main reliance was always on himself. From others he received hints and suggestions, but he disdained to appropriate or imitate their work. As a result, all his

literary output is stamped with notable originality and individuality. His diction, whether in poetry or prose, is refined and elegant, clearly expressing the thought and exactly suited to the speaker.

Still higher is Augier's merit as an inventor of characters. The power of his plays is due not to complicated plots or thrilling situations, but to the natural evolution of character. His figures are not mere silhouettes or outlines, but creatures of flesh and blood, yet all distinctly French, whether noble or base, virtuous or vicious. Zola, however, in his zeal for naturalism, found fault that some of them were too good to live, and that others changed front in an instant before the curtain fell. But Zola looked too much on the dark side of life, and on its degenerate examples. Having accustomed himself to wickedness and filth, he could hardly see their opposites anywhere. The reality of Augier's characters has been acknowledged by critics thoroughly conversant with French life. As might be expected from the champion of home, the women of Augier's dramas are excellent and finely portrayed—whether the young girl, clear-headed and warm-hearted, or the experienced woman of the world, with quick wit and keen tongue, able to hold her own in any contest. Even the wicked women, though their wickedness is not disguised, are shown still to possess the essential feminine attributes. Even in the worst there are allowed to be sure possible traces of saving grace. Only a perfectly noble writer could present such a variety of marked characters without revealing some flaw or blemish in himself.

At the comparative early age of thirty-eight Augier was admitted to a seat in the Academy. This honor was conferred on him for literary merit, though his conspicuous service to morality probably first drew the attention of that conservative body to his work. His subsequent labors maintained the distinction he had then acquired as a champion of virtue in public and private life. His own career was without incident, and simply devoted to the brand of literature he had chosen. In an age which was characterized by bustle and vainglorious display, he preferred and exemplified the quiet life of a cultured gentleman. Though obliged by his sense of duty to protest against the evils of contemporary society, he never lost faith in its ability to recover sanity and health. From his own words applied by one of his characters to another, his best critic has taken a noble line to sum up the proper estimate of the author's own attributes: "A simple and tender heart, an upright and sure spirit, a royal loyalty."

Romanticism triumphed in the first half of the nineteenth century because it afforded a welcome relief from the rigid and wearisome monotony to which Classicism had reduced the tragic drama. But after a time its highly-wrought pictures of mediaeval and modern history were found too improbable to obtain permanent sympathy. They were as unreal as those which they had displaced, and while they thrilled and entertained, they did not satisfy the minds of the hearers. The forcible attempts to mingle immoral violence with scenes of contemporary life, as in Dumas' *Antony*, startled the spectators and were allowed only for a brief season.

Scribe's moderate exhibitions of society were ingenious, but gradually became too familiar. The audience quickly saw the foregone conclusion as each new piece was put on the stage. But the conventional traditions which regulated comedy prevented the full truth from being exhibited there. The public, without suspecting the fact themselves, desired more truth on the boards —real life as it existed around them. Instead of the childish puppet-show or the pretentious historical painting, they wanted a photograph of every-day life.

But long before any settlement was reached, or could be reached, in the conflict of schools, a new voice arose. It urged that if art is an attempt to realize nature, it is improper to put any limit to the field of art. In the Classic tragedy the field has been restricted to ancient mythology, the main characters were members of royal families, national heroes and demigods. Voltaire had extended the field to the chief nations of the world, but had still restricted the characters to important historical personages. In the Romantic tragedy the field had been enlarged to include modern national history, and persons of low rank were allowed a prominent place on the stage. The Realistic drama had introduced the characters of middle-class society, and made the artistic value of the play depend on its delineation of a strong passion. But a great political change had been effected. Emperors, kings, nobles had been swept away. Their titles survived by courtesy only. In the great democratic republic shall only the *bourgeoisie* occupy the attention of novelists and novel-readers, dramatists and

play-goers? Shall there be no room for the representatives of the mass of the people? If the courtesan, even by aid of illegitimate intercourse with nobility, can be allowed a foremost place, shall the peasant, the workingman, the proletarian be excluded?

Zola was the unflinching exponent of this demand for the extension of the world of art to correspond to the world of human society. Having himself been reduced to extreme poverty, to feel the pinch of hunger, to endure the winter's cold with insufficient clothing, he was prepared by suffering to be the representative and spokesman of the downtrodden masses. He became a journalist, a critic, a novelist; and in this last capacity he made his voice heard all over France and all over the world. He attempted, also, to make use of the theatre; his own dramatization of some of his novels failed; but the versions of others made by regular playwrights had considerable, but not lasting, success. Naturalism, the undisguised presentation of even the lowest degrees and depths of human life, has not prevailed on the stage. But it is no longer excluded in blind deference to conventional laws. Zola, who by force of his own color-blind, malformed spirit, could see the foul and loathsome, rather than the healthy and beautiful aspects of human nature, succeeded in presenting his case not only to Paris, but to the world. Of his few followers, no one has been able to achieve any appreciable result.

But the very close of the nineteenth century, when the drama and literature seemed sinking into a hopeless slough, was signalized by a new triumph of poetical

Romanticism on the French stage. In 1898 Edmond Rostand came forward with a spirited historical play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, founded on the story of the youthful poet of that name, who lived in the turbulent times of the Fronde, and whose big nose made him conspicuous among his fellows. After the success of this piece Rostand added to his fame by another historical drama on Napoleon's luckless son, which, by a happy borrowing from a line of Victor Hugo's ode, he called *L'Aiglon* (the Eaglet). The part of the unfortunate youth whom nature and fate combined to prevent from being a hero, yet whom the poet restored to the sympathy of the world, was admirably personated by the great and versatile actress, Sarah Bernhardt.

The twentieth century opened auspiciously with the admission of Rostand to the French Academy, giving hope that he will win new triumph in his profession.

Brief notices of dramatists not previously treated as leaders are subjoined.

Ernest Legouvé.

Among the French dramatists who won distinction, yet did not attain the highest rank, Ernest Legouvé deserves mention. Born in 1807, he lived into the twentieth century, becoming the patriarch of the Academy. He was an instructor in the Collège de France, and his lectures on history and literature were highly esteemed. Among his dramas, *Louise de Lignorolles* gave Mlle. Mars one of her best parts. Scribe, when at the height of his reputation, was requested to prepare a



SARAH BERNHARDT AS CLEOPATRA

After an original painting by Marcelle

Though her figure had none of the voluptuous outlines of the Egyptian queen, Sarah Bernhardt was at her best in *Cleopatra*, a character which has never before or since been so finely acted.



play for Rachel, but hesitated to do so until he obtained the assistance of Legouvé, who suggested the theme of *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. For the same actress Legouvé composed his *Médée*, but she refused to appear in it. The play was afterward translated into Italian, and was performed with success by Madame Ristori; Legouvé dramatized his novel *Béatrix*. His activity as a dramatist continued until old age. In 1882 he published *Recollections of Sixty Years*, and in 1892 *Winter Flowers, Winter Fruits, Story of My Household*. Ten years later the old man eloquent passed from earth.

Meilhac and Halévy.

In the merry days of the Second Empire the gay music of Offenbach sent the *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* and *Belle Hélène* on a mirthful tour around the world. Few of the many who laughed over these spirited samples of the opéra bouffe know what the librettos of these plays were due to the collaboration of Meilhac and Halévy, who composed also *Carmen* and *Froufrou*. Henri Meilhac, born in 1832, was in boyhood employed in a bookstore, then became a journalist and later a playwright. In 1856 his little comedy, *Sarabande du Cardinal*, met with favor, and a few more similar pieces followed. In 1860 he formed a partnership with Ludovic Halévy, a member of a Jewish family noted in literature. Halévy's father was a dramatist and philosopher. The son, born in 1836, had been employed in the civil service, but gave up his clerkship to write librettos for Jacques Offenbach, the renowned

manager of opéra bouffe. His first productions of this sort were *Bata-clan* in 1855 and *Chanson de Fortunio*.

The new partnership continued to produce burlesques of the same sort, but henceforth Meilhac received more of the credit for them. Meilhac was probably more original, but was lazy, while Halévy was better in construction and a master of irony. Besides the comic operas already mentioned, the partners produced twenty more, including *Barbe-bleue*, the *Brigands*, and *Perichole*. But the best and most popular was the *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, that admirable satire on the petty German courts of times gone by. As long as these partners furnished operas for Music-master Offenbach there was some restraint on the licentiousness of the pieces, but later other men gave him vulgar and offensive plays, which were deservedly banished from the stage after a brief season.

Besides these musical dramas Meilhac and Halévy composed more than forty comedies. Among these is *Tricoche et Cacolet*, which ridicules the devices and disguises of a firm of private detectives, who try to trip each other up, and furnishes a laughable parody of the amorous intrigue so common in French plays. Other common stage tricks are introduced only to be laughed at.

But the masterpiece of this dramatic partnership is *Froufrou*, a light comedy of high order ending in a sentimental play which draws tears from every eye. Froufrou is the nickname of Gilberte, given to her from the rustling of her silks as she skips around. She is a real revelation of Parisian femininity, marrying a

reserved yet devoted husband at her sister's bidding. She afterward takes into her home that sister who had sacrificed her own love for the husband.

After the new comer sets the hitherto neglected house to rights, and even wins the child's affection, Froufrou begins to be jealous, and makes a desperate effort to recover the mother's place she has lost. Failing, she rushes from the house in frenzy, abandoning all to the sister who has supplanted her, and seeks a lover for whom she has not cared. Then follow scenes of gloom and despair. At last the wretched fugitive comes back to be forgiven, to kiss the child she had abandoned and to die, still thinking about her fine clothes.

In 1881 the long partnership was broken. Halévy turned from the stage to fiction of a very different sort. No novel has ever been more commended for young ladies' schools than his *Abbé Constantin* (1882), a story of two American ladies in France. This simple and charming tale opened for him the doors of the French Academy at once. Such a tale could not escape dramatization, but Halévy left the task to other hands. At an earlier period he had written *La Famille Cardinal* and *Cricquette*, playful satires on aspects of Parisian common life. In later years he wrote many brilliant stories and sketches on this favorite subject.

Meilhac still wrote for the stage, sometimes alone but more commonly in collaboration. From the time when he made his first dramatic efforts, *Satania* and *Garde-toi, Je Me Garde*, both of which were produced at the Palais Royal, but with indifferent success, Meilhac

continued to write plays almost until the day of his death, which occurred in 1895, seven years after his election to the Academy. His *La Vertu de Célimène*, written in conjunction with Arthur Delavigne, was one of his most popular pieces, notwithstanding its improbable plot. Delavigne, it may be mentioned, was the author of *Louis XI.*

Edouard Pailleron.

One of the most popular plays in Paris is the satirical comedy, *Le Monde où l'on s'Ennuie*, which was first presented in 1868, and has held the stage at intervals ever since. The author was born in 1834, and while still a notary's clerk obtained recognition as a novelist. Before the play with which his name is commonly associated he had written a companion piece, *Le Monde où l'on s'Amuse*. In 1893 he won new success with *Cabotins*, which was kept on the stage at the *Théâtre Français* for most of the winter. It was a vivid picture of Paris bohemian life with ridicule of office-holders and machine politics, and yet admitted effective emotional elements. The chief character is an adroit young politician, who has a natural gift of leadership among men. The scenes vary from the frolic of an artist's lodging to a drawing-room in the aristocratic centre of Paris. Pailleron is a skillful portrait painter, a keen critic of society, and an able presenter of high moral problems. His style is marked by lucidity and his epigrams strike home. He is a slow and careful worker, and steadily refused to sign a con-

tract for a play in advance. In 1884 he was elected to the Academy.

Octave Feuillet.

Prominent among the dramatists and novelists of the Second Empire was Octave Feuillet (1821-1890). In the beginning of his literary career he had belonged to the staff of the great Dumas, and assisted in some of his master's novels. Afterward he attached himself to the poet Alfred de Musset, and contributed to his *Scènes et Proverbes*, a series of brief dramatic sketches. Feuillet, even in his youth, was reserved and aristocratic and avoided low associations; he was studious and devoted to imaginative ideals. From the restrictions of his early productions, both in subject and style, the critics called him "the Musset of the family." Throughout his writings he retained the romantic spirit, though in the later plays it was modified by the new fashion of realism.

When he issued a complete edition of his works, he omitted most of his early plays. His first novel, *Onesta* (1848), was an Italian story of passion. Many which followed it were successfully dramatized. His name was made known throughout the world by his *Romance of a Poor Young Man*. The hero, concealing his noble birth, becomes a tutor in a wealthy family living in a lonely region. Here he comes in contact with a highly impulsive young woman, and his struggle to maintain his supposed character and suppress his feelings leads to several striking situations. The story was dramatized in 1858. In spite of his optimistic spirit and belief

in the innate nobility of human nature, most of Feuillet's stories are sad and the conclusion sometimes tragical; for the man was by nature somewhat of a melancholic temperament, and this tendency was strengthened by his association with Alfred de Musset.

Feuillet published several of his plays in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* before they were acted. His *Crise* thus appeared in 1848, and was not put on the stage until six years later. It has but three characters of importance, a husband, wife and family physician. The husband informs the physician that, after ten years of happy married life, in which he has begotten two children, he finds that his wife has suddenly changed and become sometimes irritable and sometimes sentimental. The doctor explains that this indicates the crisis in her life, when a woman awakes to a longing for a new experience, for forbidden fruit. The husband asks for advice, and the physician prescribes as a cure that he find some devoted friend who will pretend to meet the desires of his wife but only lead her to the brink of crime; assuring him that she will shrink back in horror and by this narrow escape she will be cured completely. The husband thinks the doctor is the man for the occasion, and arranges with him to put the dangerous scheme in practice. The husband finds his wife's private diary and shows it to the lover; they read it together to learn how the wife feels. As an actual result love is kindled between the doctor and the wife. At last they make a guilty appointment, but the husband appears on the scene, and, using parables, indirectly threatens to de-

prive the woman of her children, should she go astray. The husband's parables have such effect on the wife that she renounces the new love and embraces her husband with ardor.

Some years later Feuillet wrote the comedy *Tentation*, which was acted without being first published. It is a story somewhat similar to his *Crise*, but of a mirthful character, and ends happily by a dramatic trick. *Montjoye*, a comedy in five acts, appeared in 1863. The hero is a man whose polite manners cover a determination to succeed at any cost, yet, by a dramatic inconsistency, in the end he softens into sentiment and repents of his evil designs. The story is a mirror of the moral rottenness of the Empire. In this and later plays Feuillet yielded to the influence of Alexandre Dumas, the younger; thus, his *Dalila* shows traces of the *Dame aux Camélias*. He sought now to thrill, if not to shock, his audience, yet he lacked the strength to do so. This is seen again in his *Julie* (1869) and in the *Sphinx* (1874), a violent and utterly improbable play, which owed its success to the superb acting of Mlle. Croizette.

Feuillet was a favorite of the Empress Eugénie, and therefore Napoleon III made him librarian at Fontainebleau. He was elected to the Academy in 1863. He died at Paris on the 29th of December, 1890. Feuillet in the beginning of his career seemed to be an exemplar of aristocratic virtue; before the close he had sunk to be an expositor of aristocratic vice; but this was the almost inevitable result of his connection with the Second Empire, whose court, notwithstanding

all its gayety and brilliancy, was the most corrupt in Europe, a very hotbed of vice in alluring form.

Georges Ohnet.

The novels of Georges Ohnet have an enormous circulation in France, but are less known abroad than they deserve. He was born in Paris in 1848, and early began contributing stories to *Figaro* and other papers. The publishers, however, refused for a time to put them in book form. At last one ventured with *Serge Panine*, which took Paris by storm and was crowned by the Academy. Thenceforth he had no difficulty in obtaining access to the public. Still more favorable was the reception accorded to *Le Maître des Forges*, which, like many of the rest, he prepared for the stage. A translation of this, his most popular work, is given, slightly abridged, in this volume.

And here we must conclude our sketch of the French drama, leaving the plays that follow to speak for themselves, in language more eloquent than mere narration can supply. In the works of Rostand and a few others is a relief from the highly spiced comedy of the sensational school, with its thinly veiled indecency; nor is there, as some would have us believe, any indication that the creative activity of French dramatic literature is on the verge of exhaustion. On the contrary its future has seldom been more hopeful than at the present day.

THE CHANDELIER

(LE CHANDELIER)

OF

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

(*Translated by W. H. H. Chambers.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAITRE ANDRÉ, a Notary.

JACQUELINE, his Wife.

CAPTAIN CLAVAROCHE, of the Dragoons.

FORTUNIO, }
WILLIAM, } Clerks.
LANDRY, }

MADELINE, a Servant.

PETER, a Gardener.

The Chandelier.

ARGUMENT.

Captain Clavaroche is playing the gay Lothario with Jacqueline, wife of the notary André. One night, Landry, a clerk of the notary's, sees the captain slipping through a window. The husband is informed and rushes to his wife's room, only to find her apparently in a most profound sleep. After a somewhat stormy scene he retires, and the captain, released from his hiding place in the wife's room, tells her that she must get a "chandelier"—a young man on whom the husband's suspicion is to be fixed. Jacqueline demurs at first, but finally consents and chooses Fortunio, another of André's clerks, who speedily becomes desperately in love with her. A little later he overhears a conversation between the captain and Jacqueline, and learns why he has received so much attention from the lady. Notwithstanding this knowledge, when he receives a note from her asking him to meet her in the garden at midnight, his love is so great that he resolves to keep the appointment, though assured that it is simply a trap to permit the husband to kill him, and thus free the wife from further suspicion. In a touching scene Jacqueline

learns that Fortunio knows all, yet would sacrifice himself; this pure devotion awakens her love and she resolves to take him into her favor. The husband, who has succeeded in catching only the cat in a snare he has set for a man, and who has spent the night in vainly watching for the lover, is now fully convinced of his wife's faithfulness, and the closing scene finds him in jovial mood.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A bedroom. Jacqueline in bed. Enter M. André in a dressing gown.

M. André.—Hello! wife. Hey! Jacqueline, hey! hello! Jacqueline! my wife! Plague take the sleeper! Get up, Jacqueline! What a sleeper! Jacqueline! hello! hello! It is I, André, your husband, who has something serious to say to you. Jacqueline, are you dead? If you don't wake up immediately, I'll douse you with the water pitcher.

Jacqueline.—What is it, my dear?

M. And.—By jingo! it's lucky you awakened. Won't you ever stop stretching and yawning? Sleeping seems to be right in your line. Now, listen. I've something to say. Last evening Landry, my clerk——

Jaq.—Oh! bless me! it isn't daylight yet. Have you gone mad, M. André, that you awaken me in this manner without a reason? Go back to bed, I pray you. Are you sick?

M. And.—No, I haven't gone mad, nor am I sick, but awaken you wittingly. I must speak to you now: mind that you first listen carefully, and then answer. Now, this is what happened to Landry, my clerk; you know him well——

Jaq.—What time is it, please?

M. And.—Six o'clock in the morning. Pay attention to what I am saying. 'Tis not a pleasant matter, nor to me a subject to laugh about. My honor, madame, and yours—perchance the very lives of both of us—depend upon your explanation. Landry, my clerk, last night saw——

Jacq.—But, M. André, if you are really sick, you ought to tell me at once. Am I not the one, my darling, to care for and watch over you?

M. And.—I am very well, I tell you. Are you in a mood to listen?

Jacq.—My stars! you frighten me. Have we been robbed?

M. And.—No, we have not been robbed; but sit up and listen with all your ears. Landry, my clerk, awakened me just now to hand back certain papers he had been given to finish during the night. While he was in my study——

Jacq.—By the saints above! I'm sure you have had some quarrel at that café you frequent.

M. And.—No, no; I've had no quarrel at all, nor has anything happened to me. Won't you listen? I tell you that Landry, my clerk, last night saw a man slip through your window.

Jacq.—I see by your looks that you have lost at play.

M. And.—Confound it! Jacqueline, are you deaf? You have a lover, madame; is that clear? You're deceiving me. A man this very night has scaled our walls. What does this mean?

Jacq.—Will you kindly open the shutter?

M. And.—'Tis open. You can yawn after dinner; heaven knows, you rarely fail. But look out for yourself, Jacqueline. I'm a man peaceably inclined, and I have taken great care of you. I was your father's friend, and you are my daughter almost as much as you are my wife. I resolved while coming here to treat you gently, and you see am keeping my resolution, since, before condemning, I wish to afford you an opportunity to defend yourself and explain matters categorically. If you refuse, take care! There is a garrison in the city, and you see, God forgive me! a goodly number of hussars. Your silence may confirm the doubts that have assailed me for a long time.

Jacq.—Ah! M. André, you love me no longer. 'Tis in vain that you endeavor to conceal by kindly words the mortal coldness which has replaced your love. 'Twas not so formerly; you would not have used this tone, nor would you then have condemned me upon a word and without a hearing. Two years of peace, love and happiness would not be allowed at the

first word to vanish like shadows. But alas! jealousy constrains you; cold indifference long since opened to her the door of your heart. What would evidence avail? Innocence itself would be in the wrong before you. You love me no longer, since you accuse me.

M. And.—'Tis a very pretty speech, Jacqueline, but unfortunately has nothing to do with the matter. My clerk, Landry, saw a man—

Jacq.—Heavens and earth! I understood you very well. Do you take me for a beast, that you make such a din in my ears? 'Tis insupportably fatiguing.

M. And.—What is it that prevents you from giving me an answer?

Jacq.—O Lord, how unfortunate I am! What is to become of me? I clearly see that you have resolved upon my death; that you will do with me as you please. You are a man, I but a woman, and force is on your side. I am resigned; I expected it: you would seize the first pretext to justify your violence. I have no alternative but to leave. I'll go with my daughter into a convent, in a desert, if possible; I will carry away and bury deep in my heart the souvenir of days that are no more.

M. And.—Jacqueline, my wife, for the love of heaven, do you mock me?

Jacq.—Well, now, M. André, do you really mean that you are speaking seriously?

M. And.—Speaking seriously? Confound it! my patience is almost gone; I do not know what prevents me from bringing you before a court of justice.

Jacq.—You—bring me before a court?

M. And.—Yes, I—before a court. It's enough to make a man lose his eternal soul to have anything to do with such a mule. I would never have believed that any one could be so obstinate.

Jacq.—(Jumping from the bed.) You saw a man enter through the window? Did you see him, monsieur—yes or no?

M. And.—I didn't actually see him with my eyes.

Jacq.—You didn't see him with your eyes, yet you wish to bring me before a court of justice?

M. And.—Yes, by heavens, if you do not answer.

Jacq.—Are you familiar, M. André, with that rule of conduct my grandmother learned of her grandmother? When a husband has confidence in his wife, he keeps strictly to himself evil report; and when he is sure of his facts, he has no need to consult her. When he has doubts, he clears them up; when he lacks proof, he is silent; and when he cannot demonstrate that he is right, he is wrong. Now, then, come on; let us leave.

M. And.—Is that the way you take it?

Jacq.—Yes, that's the way; march on, I'll follow you.

M. And.—But where do you wish me to go at this hour?

Jacq.—Before the justice.

M. And.—But, Jacqueline—

Jacq.—March on; march! When you menace, you must not menace in vain.

M. And.—Come, come! Calm yourself.

Jacq.—No; you wish to take me before a justice, and I want to go.

M. And.—What will you say in your defense? You may as well tell me now.

Jacq.—No; I will say nothing here.

M. And.—Why not?

Jacq.—Because I want to go before the justice.

M. And.—You'll goad me to madness, and it seems that I must be dreaming. Heavenly Father, creator of the world, 'twill drive me wild! What! is it possible? I was in my bed; I slept, and I call upon my chamber walls to testify that I slept with all my soul. Landry, my clerk, a youth of sixteen, who never in his life spoke ill of any one, the most candid fellow in the world, spent the night copying an inventory; he saw a man enter through the window; he told me; I slipped into my dressing gown, came in a friendly way to beg an explanation, and am overwhelmed with abuse. You act like a fury—even jump out of bed and seize me by the throat. "Tis beyond my comprehension. I will not be in fit condition for a week to make a computation that shows common sense. Jacqueline, my little wife, is it indeed you that treats me so?

Jacq.—Really, you're a very badly used man!

M. And.—But after all, my dear little wife, why do you refuse to answer? Do you think I am really capable of thinking you deceive me? Alas! when one word will suffice, why do you not say it? 'Twas perhaps a thief that slipped through the window. This section of the city is none too safe at best, and we would do well to change it. Then, too, all these soldiers are very annoying to me, my precious jewel. When we take a stroll, or go to the theatre or a ball, yes, even in our home these fellows are constantly with us. I cannot breathe a word in your ear without running foul of an epaulette or finding between my legs a terrific crooked sabre to impede me. Who can tell if the impertinence of one of them has not carried him even to the length of scaling our window. But I see clearly that you know nothing of the circumstance. You do not encourage them; those rascally fellows are capable of anything. Come, now, Jacqueline, give me your hand. You're not angry with me, I hope.

Jacq.—I certainly am angry at you. To menace me with a court of justice! Just wait till my mother hears it; then we'll see if you dare to face her.

M. And.—Oh! my dear, don't tell her. What's the use of revealing to others our little misunderstandings? 'Tis but a slight cloud passing o'er the heavens of our love, to leave it but more tranquil and serene.

Jacq.—All right. As you wish.

M. And.—Am I not sure you love me? Have I not the greatest confidence in you? Have you not given me every proof a man could ask, Jacqueline, that you are wholly my own? This window that Landry speaks of doesn't open directly into your room. Traversing the peristyle, one may enter, in that way, the garden. I would not be surprised if our neighbor Pierre had been foraging among our fruits. Pshaw! I'll make a sentinel of our gardener to-night, and place the wolf trap in the path. To-morrow we'll both be laughing.

Jacq.—But now I'm dropping with fatigue. You awakened me most unseasonably.

M. And.—Go back to bed, my dear; I'll go now and leave you alone. Come, don't think of it any more; good-bye. You

see, my darling, I do not make the slightest search of your apartment, do not even open a wardrobe door, but believe your every word. It seems to me that I love you a hundredfold more, since I wrongly suspected you; but now I know you to be innocent. I'll make amends shortly: we'll go in the country, and I'll make you a handsome present besides. Good-bye, my dear; we shall see each other soon again.

(He leaves. Jacqueline, now alone, opens a wardrobe.
Captain Clavarache is seen crouched within.)

Enter Captain Clavarache.

Captain.—Phew!

Jacq.—Quick! you must leave. My husband is jealous. You were seen, but not recognized. You cannot return here. We've no time to lose. What shall we do? We must see each other, yet escape every eye. How shall we manage it? The gardener will be watching this evening, and I am not even sure my maid is to be trusted. To meet outside is simply impossible: in this petty city everything is as clear as daylight. You are covered with dust, and seem to limp.

Capt.—My knee is broken, and so is my head. The handle of my sabre pierced my ribs. Oh, faugh! I feel as if I had just come out of a mill.

Jacq.—Burn my letters as soon as you return home. Should they be found, I am lost; my mother would put me in a convent. A clerk, one Landry, saw you get into the window; he shall pay dearly for it. What shall we do? What means shall we adopt? Answer me. You are pale as death.

Capt.—I was in a most awkward position when you closed the wardrobe door, hence I found myself for an hour like a natural history specimen in a jar of alcohol.

Jacq.—Oh, dear! What shall we do?

Capt.—Pshaw! Nothing easier—

Jacq.—But—go on.

Capt.—Oh, I don't know just—but it's very easy. You don't imagine this is my first affair, do you? But I'm quite worn out. Give me a glass of water.

Jacq.—I think it would be best for us to see each other at the farm.

Capt.—What inconvenient animals these husbands are when they wake up! This uniform is in a pretty state, and I'll cut a fine figure on parade! (He drinks.) Have you a hair-brush handy? Devil take me! but it took the courage of a fiend to keep myself from sneezing in all that dust.

Jacq.—Here is my toilet table; help yourself.

Capt.—(Brushing his hair.) What's the use of going to the farm? Your husband is, after all, of mild and gentle make-up. Are nocturnal apparitions a habit of his?

Jacq.—No, thank God! I'm trembling yet. But pray remember that, with the ideas now in his head, every suspicion is bound to fall on you.

Capt.—Why on me?

Jacq.—Why? Oh—I don't know—it seems to me that it must. Really, Captain, truth is indeed strange; it resembles a spirit, in that we intuitively, rather than with our senses, perceive it.

Capt.—(Adjusting his uniform.) Bah! 'Tis only grandmothers and justices of the peace who say that everything becomes known. They base their conclusions on the, to them, sufficient reason that everything which does not become known remains unknown, consequently does not exist. I appear to talk folly; upon reflection, however, you will see that it is true.

Jacq.—I'll take your word for it. My hands tremble, and I shake with a fear that is worse than the harm that might befall me.

Capt.—With a little patience we can arrange everything.

Jacq.—What! You must leave at once; the day breaks.

Capt.—By Jove! what a madcap! You're pretty as a picture with that air of a startled fawn. Now, compose yourself. Sit down, and let us talk this matter over rationally. Personally, I'm almost presentable—almost neat. What a cruel wardrobe you have! 'Tis not a happy fate to be numbered among your effects.

Jacq.—Do not laugh; you make me shudder.

Capt.—Well, now, my dear, listen a moment, while I develop my principles. When one meets in his path that particular species of ferocious beast known as the jealous husband——

Jacq.—Oh, Captain! out of regard for me—

Capt.—Did I shock you? (He embraces her.)

Jacq.—At least, speak lower.

Capt.—There are three certain methods to avoid all further inconvenience. The first one is to part; but this, of course, would not meet with our approval.

Jacq.—You nearly frighten me to death.

Capt.—The second—incontestably better—is to pay no attention whatever, and in case of need, to—

Jacq.—Well, to—

Capt.—No, that won't answer, either; your husband is accustomed to handling only the pen. The sword must be kept in its scabbard. There remains, then, but the third, and that is to find a *chandelier*.

Jacq.—A *chandelier*? What do you mean?

Capt.—That is the name, in regimental circles, that we call the callow youth of easy disposition who is permitted to carry a shawl or parasol; who, when a lady rises from her seat to dance, gravely occupies the vacant place, and follows her everywhere with his melancholy eye, while playing with her fan; who lends his hand to lead her from her box, and proudly places upon the near-by table the glass she has just drained; who accompanies her when she takes a stroll, and in the evening reads to her; who buzzes continually around, and pours into her ear a flood of commonplaces. Should the lady be admired, he is puffed with pride; if insulted, he fights for her. A pillow is missing from the couch, he it is that runs, that flies to seek it, for he knows the house and all its inmates thoroughly; he is part of its furnishings, and finds his way everywhere without a light. Evenings he plays with the maiden aunts reversi or piquet. As he soon supplants the husband in clever and assiduous attention, the callow youth becomes as gall and wormwood to that gentleman. Is there, perchance, a fête somewhere that the lady would fain attend, he is shaved by break of day, and many hours before its scheduled time has preëmpted chairs for the lady. Inquire of him why he has become her shadow, he cannot tell nor does he know. 'Tis simply because at times the lady encourages him with a smile, or when waltzing abandons to him her finger-tips, which he

presses in ecstasy. He is like those petty lords who hold an honorary office and have an entrée on gala days, but to whom the cabinet is ever closed: 'tis no affair of theirs. In a word, his favors end where true favors begin. Behind this convenient manikin is concealed the happy mystery. He is the Japanese screen which hides all that happens in the cozy chimney-corner. Is the husband jealous, 'tis of him; is gossip stirring, 'tis on his account. He it is who, one fine morning, is shown the door, after some servant or other has heard during the preceding night heavy footsteps in madame's apartments; 'tis he who is spied upon; his letters, full of the most respectful tenderness, are those opened by the mother-in-law. He goes and comes, fetches and carries, tugs and pulls—'tis his share, by means of which the discreet lover and his most innocent companion are covered with an impenetrable veil, and laugh in their sleeves at would-be quidnuncs.

Jacq.—I cannot prevent myself from laughing now, in spite of my fears; but why is this personage given that bizarre name—*chandelier*?

Capt.—Well, you see, it's because he carries the—

Jacq.—Enough, enough; I understand.

Capt.—Now, my dear, is there not among your friends some good fellow capable of playing this important rôle—a part, in truth, not without its compensations? Come; think o'er your list of friends, and seek him out. (He looks at his watch.) What! seven o'clock? I must leave you at once. I'm on duty to-day.

Jacq.—But really, Captain, I'm acquainted with no one here; and besides, 'twould be a deception for which I lack courage. What! Encourage a young man, allure him to my side, feed him with hope, make him, perhaps, really in love with me, and then to jest and profit by his suffering? 'Tis a scaly trick that you propose.

Capt.—Would you rather have me lose you? And in our present fix, can't you see that we must divert suspicion from us at any price?

Jacq.—But why cause them to rest on another?

Capt.—Oh, so that they'll rest. Suspicions, my dear, especially the suspicions of a jealous husband, cannot soar in

space; they are not swallows, they must rest somewhere, sooner or later, and 'tis safer to furnish the nest.

Jacq.—No, I really cannot do it. Wouldn't I be forced to actually compromise myself?

Capt.—Are you fooling? Wouldn't you always be able, when called to task, to demonstrate your innocence? There are lovers and lovers.

Jacq.—Well, our time is short. Whom would you suggest? Pick out some one.

Capt.—(At the window.) Look! here in your garden are three young fellows seated at the foot of a tree; they are your husband's clerks; take your choice, and when I return have one of them head over heels in love with you.

Jacq.—But how will that be possible? I have never said a word to them.

Capt.—Are you not one of Eve's daughters? Come, Jacqueline, consent.

Jacq.—You must not depend upon it. I cannot—

Capt.—'Tis agreed. Many thanks. Good-bye, my timid blonde. You are clever, young and pretty; rather loving, too, eh, madame? And now to work; go cast your net.

Jacq.—You're very bold, Captain.

Capt.—Proud and bold; proud to please, and bold to keep you. (He leaves.)

SCENE II.

A small garden. Fortunio, Landry and William, seated.

Fortunio.—That is truly most singular—a strange adventure.

Landry.—Don't mention it, at least; you'll make me lose my place.

For.—Quite strange, and equally interesting. Yes, whoever he is, he's a lucky fellow.

Lan.—Promise you'll not repeat it. M. André made me swear secrecy.

William.—Of our neighbor, the king and woman, one must never speak an ill word.

For.—The thought that such things happen makes my heart throb. And you really saw it, Landry?

Lan.—That's a pretty question! Surely, without a doubt.

For.—You heard some one stepping lightly?

Lan.—As lightly as a cat behind the wall.

For.—And you heard the window creak slightly?

Lan.—Like a grain of sand under one's heel.

For.—Then you saw on the wall the shadow of a man as he glided past the door?

Lan.—Like a spectre wrapped in a mantle.

For.—And a hand behind the blinds?

Lan.—Trembling like a leaf.

For.—A light in the gallery, then a kiss, followed by re-treating footsteps?

Lan.—Then silence, drawn curtains and darkness.

For.—Had I stood in your shoes, I should have remained till dawn.

Will.—Why, are you in love with Jacqueline? You would have had a pretty job.

For.—I solemnly swear, William, that I have never raised my eyes in the presence of Jacqueline. No, not even in a dream have I dared to love her. Once I met her at a ball, but my hand has never touched hers, nor have her lips ever breathed a word to me. What she does or what she thinks, never in my life have I known; I know only that she paces the garden walk afternoons, and that I breathe upon the glass and polish it with my sleeve, that I may better see her.

Will.—But if you are not in love with her, why do you say that you would have remained till dawn? There was nothing better to be done than precisely what Landry did—make a clean breast of all he saw and heard to M. André, our master.

For.—Landry did as pleased him best. Let Romeo possess Juliet! I would rather be the matutinal bird to warn them of impending danger.

Will.—Just like one of your romantic pranks. But what possible good can it do you if Jacqueline has a lover? 'Tis some garrison officer or other.

For.—Would that I had been in the study! Would that I had seen and heard it all!

Will.—God bless us! 'Tis our bookseller that poisons you with romantic fiction. And what do you gain by the tale? To remain the rustic lout as before. You do not hope, I trust, to stand in line? Yet—yes, 'tis doubtless this: monsieur fondly imagines that some day she will think of him. You poor fellow! You little know our fine provincial ladies. We, who are dressed in black, are but small fry—at best, good only for sewing girls. Our fine ladies are tempted solely by the scarlet coat; and, once caught, what matters it if garrisons do change? Military men are as like as peas in a pod—love one, and you love a score. Nothing changes but the lining of the uniform, which from yellow turns, perchance, to green or white. As to the rest, do not our ladies find the same carefully upturned mustache, the same military stride and manner, the same language, and the same delight? They are all cast in one mold; one might be lost, another found, and the lady none the wiser.

For.—There is no talking with you; you spend your holidays and Sundays watching tenpin players.

Will.—And you spend them alone at your window with your nose buried in some silly book. Certainly a vast difference! With your romantic notions, you'll soon be fit only for a strait-jacket. Come, we must go in. What are you thinking of? It is time we were at work.

For.—Oh that I had been with Landry last night in the study!
(They leave.)

Enter Jacqueline and the maid Madeline.

Jacqueline.—Our plums will be fine this year, and our wall-fruits, too, look promising. But let us go to the other side of the garden and sit on yonder bench.

Madeline.—Are you not afraid, madame, of the wind? It is not at all warm this morning.

Jacq.—Really, during the two years that I have lived in this house, I don't think I have been twice in this part of the garden. Look at this honeysuckle; and this lattice-work—how nicely it is placed for the clematis to climb upon.

Mad.—Pray remember, madame, you are not warmly covered; you insisted upon coming down bareheaded.

Jacq.—Tell me, since you happen to be here, who are those young fellows in yonder room on the lower floor? They were here but a moment or two ago, and, if I am not mistaken, are looking at us now.

Mad.—Why, madame, don't you know them? They are M. André's clerks.

Jacq.—Indeed! Then you know them, do you, Madeline? You seem to blush as you speak.

Mad.—I, madame, why should I blush? I know them by sight, for I see them every day; yet I cannot really say I know them.

Jacq.—Come, admit you blushed. In fact, why should you be ashamed? As nearly as I can judge from here, the young fellows are not at all bad looking. Tell me, which one do you prefer? Take me into your confidence. You are a very nice girl, Madeline. If these young fellows desire to court you, where's the harm?

Mad.—I didn't say there was any harm in it; they are all fairly well off, and their families quite respectable. One of them is small and blonde, and there's not a grisette in town that turns up her nose when he tips his hat.

Jacq.—(Going nearer the house.) Which one is it? That one with a mustache?

Mad.—No, indeed! That is M. Landry, an awkward fellow with nothing to say.

Jacq.—Then it is the one that is writing?

Mad.—No, no; that is M. William, a good, honest fellow, but his hair won't curl, and every one pities him when, on Sundays, he tries to dance.

Jacq.—Of whom, then, do you speak? There are no others, I think, in the study.

Mad.—Don't you see, over there, standing by the window, a nicely dressed and trim young man? Look! he leans forward. That is Fortunio.

Jacq.—Oh, yes; I see him now... He's not at all bad, I must say, with his hair curling about his ears and that charm-

ing air of innocence. Look out for yourself, Madeline; those little angels are the very ones that make girls trip. So he courts grisettes, does he, this little gentleman with the blue eyes? But really, Madeline, you need not lower yours with so modest an air. You might have made a worse choice. So, then, he has something to say, this gentleman, has he? and is provided with a dancing-master as well?

Mad.—To speak with all due respect, madame, if I believed him in love, it would not be with one so lowly. If you had turned your head while walking in your favorite path, you could have seen him more than once, with folded arms and pen behind his ear, watching your every movement, as long as he was able.

Jacq.—You're surely fooling, Madeline; and have you, then, forgotten to whom you are talking?

Mad.—A cat may look at a king; and there are those who say that the king is not displeased with the cat's attention. He's no fool, this fellow, and his father is a rich jeweller. I cannot believe that simply looking at any one is an insult.

Jacq.—Who told you that it is me he looks at? I don't imagine he has taken you into his confidence to this extent, has he?

Mad.—When a young man turns his head—pshaw! madame, one has but little need of the woman in her to divine where the eyes rest. I do not require his confidence, nor would it tell me more than I already know.

Jacq.—I'm cold; get me a shawl, and spare your silly talk.
(*Madeline leaves.*)

That must be the gardener I see through the trees. (*She calls.*) Peter! Peter!

Enter Peter, the gardener.

Peter.—Did you call me, madame?

Jacq.—Yes. I wish you to go to yonder room and inquire for a clerk named Fortunio. Tell him to come here; I wish to speak to him.
(*Peter leaves.*)

Enter Fortunio.

Fortunio.—Madame, your gardener doubtless made a mistake. He said that you were asking for me.

Jacq.—Sit down. The gardener was not mistaken. I find myself, Monsieur Fortunio, in something of a fix—perplexed and troubled. In fact, I hardly know just how to ask for what I want, nor why I address myself to you.

For.—I am only the third clerk. If your business is important, our head clerk, William, is yonder. Shall I call him?

Jacq.—Oh, no! Were it a matter of business, have I not my husband?

For.—Can I serve you in any way? Speak freely. Though young, I would gladly die for you.

Jacq.—You speak gallantly and bravely; yet, if I am not mistaken, you do not know me.

For.—The star which glitters on the horizon does not know the eyes that watch it; but the star itself is known to the lowest shepherd that walks the hillside.

Jacq.—It's a secret, the matter I wish to speak of, and I hesitate for two reasons: first, you might betray me, and in the second place, even while serving, you might form a bad opinion of me.

For.—Can you not give me a trial? I beg you, believe in me.

Jacq.—But, as you have already said, you are young; you might believe in yourself and yet not be able always to answer for yourself.

For.—You are more beautiful than I am young, and what my heart feels I can answer for.

Jacq.—Necessity is imprudent. See if any one is listening.

For.—No one; the garden is deserted, and I closed the door of the study.

Jacq.—No, really, I cannot speak. Pray excuse this useless step and say no more about it.

For.—Alas, madame! I am truly unfortunate. But it shall be as you desire.

Jacq.—The position in which I find myself is one that certainly lacks common sense. I need—shall I not own it?—not exactly a friend, but rather a friendly service. I was walking in the garden, unable to make up my mind just where to turn, and while looking at some fruit, chanced to see you at yonder

window, and, although I frankly admit I cannot tell why, the idea came to call you.

For.—To whatever caprice of chance I owe this favor, kindly permit me to profit by it. I can but repeat my words: I would gladly die for you.

Jacq.—Do not repeat them too often. 'Tis the surest way to keep me silent.

For.—Why? They come from the bottom of my heart.

Jacq.—Why? Why? You do not realize—and I refuse even to think— No, what I would ask of you cannot have a result so grave. Merciful heavens, 'tis a bagatelle—a mere trifle—and you are but a child, are you not? You perhaps think me rather pretty, and lightly utter a few words of gallantry. I accept them in the same spirit. 'Tis quite natural. Any man in your place would say as much.

For.—Madame, I have never lied. It is true I am but a child, and you may doubt my words; but God knows I speak the truth.

Jacq.—That's right. You understand the part, and stick to your words bravely. But that is quite enough on this subject. Take that chair and sit down.

For.—I do so at your command.

Jacq.—Pray pardon a question which may seem singular. My maid, Madeline, has told me that your father is a jeweller. Then he must, I suppose, have more or less dealings with the merchants in the city?

For.—Yes, madame; I may say that there is scarcely one of any importance who does not know our house.

Jacq.—Consequently you have occasion to visit the business section of the city, and your face is known in the principal stores?

For.—Yes, madame.

Jacq.—One of my friends has an avaricious and jealous husband. She has a fortune of her own, but it is not at her disposal. Her pleasures, her tastes, her adornments, her caprices, if you like—for what woman lives without caprices?—are all regulated and controlled. It is not only at the end of the year that she, poor woman, is taken to task for her expenditures,

but each month, nearly every week, she must render an account, must dispute and must calculate with her husband the purchases she has made. You will understand that moral precepts, economic sermons and miserly maxims are not lacking when the bills fall due; in short, with ample means, she lives as if in straitened circumstances. She is poorer than the drawer in which her money is kept, and her wealth avails her nothing. Now, that little word *toilet*, when used with reference to woman, is, you know, of profound significance. So then it was found necessary, at whatever cost, to use some artifice. The tradesmen's bills contained only those commonplace expenditures which the husband called "of prime necessity"—they were paid openly and above board; but at certain specified times, several private bills made mention of some trifles that the wife in her turn called "of secondary necessity," but really the true one—those the uninformed might term superfluous. By this means everything was nicely arranged, each was content, and the husband, confident in the integrity of his bills, and not familiar with the details of feminine finery, did not divine that all he saw upon his wife's back was not to be found on the bills he paid.

For.—I see no great harm in that.

Jacq.—Now, this is what happened: The husband, always rather suspicious, finally perceived, not the increase in finery, but the decrease in money. He threatened the servants, pounded the safe, and scolded the merchants. The poor, abandoned woman has not lost a louis thereby, but nevertheless finds herself, like a new Tantalus, devoured by day and night with a thirst for finery. No more confidants, no more private bills nor unknown expenditures. The thirst, however, continues to torment her, and she seeks to quench it, whatever the risk. A clever young man is needed—one who is especially discreet, and of sufficient rank to awaken no suspicion in the city—a young man that would be willing to visit the stores and buy, as if for himself, all that she requires. It would be necessary for him to have, from the very beginning, free access to the house. He must come and go without question; must be, of course, endowed with good taste and know how to choose wisely. Perhaps there might be found, by happy chance, a young man that was known in the city to be paying court to a

young and pretty coquette. You don't happen to be so situated, I suppose? That happy hit would justify everything. 'Twould then be thought that all these purchases were for the young lady. This is the kind of a young man I am looking for.

For.—Tell your friend that I offer myself; I will do my best to serve her.

Jacq.—But to make this service possible, and to have free access to the house of which I spoke, you understand, of course, the confidant must show himself elsewhere than in the study. You understand that he must have his place at the table and in the drawing-room. You understand that, while discretion is a virtue too hard to find, to lack recognition he will require perfect willingness as well, and that tact would be no disadvantage. He must, some fine evening—to-night, for instance—know where to find a partly opened door, and how to bring within a furtive jewel, like a bold smuggler. A mysterious air must never betray his cunning. He needs to be prudent, quick and clever; he must always bear in mind that Spanish proverb which carries him that follows it far on the road to fortune: "To the audacious, God lends a hand."

For.—I pray you, use me.

Jacq.—All these conditions fulfilled, even though not fully assured of silence, the confidant could be told the name of his new friend. He might then receive without a scruple, and as cleverly as a young soubrette, a purse which he would know how to employ. Quick! I see Madeline, who is coming with my shawl. Be discreet and prudent. Good-bye. The friend is myself, and you are the confidant; the purse is there at the foot of the chair.
(She leaves.)

Enter William and Landry. They stand on the steps of the study.

William.—Hello, Fortunio! M. André is here and asks for you.

Landry.—There is work on your desk. What are you doing outside?

For.—Hey? Beg pardon; what did you say?

Will.—We said that the master is asking for you.

Lan.—Come here; you are needed. What is that dreamer thinking about?

For.—In truth, 'tis most singular—a strange adventure.
(They leave.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

A drawing-room. Captain Clavaroche is standing before a mirror.

Captain.—Honor bright, if one really loved these fine ladies, 'twould be a wretched business; for the profession of ladies' man is, when everything is taken into consideration, ruinous toil. Sometimes, just at the very moment you are most content, a footman fumbling at the door obliges you to slip away, and your lady-love, who yields but an ear to you, in the midst of your rapturous transport thrusts you into a wardrobe. At others, stretched at length on your couch at home in perfect ease after a hard day's work, suddenly a messenger arrives in haste to remind you that you are loved—a league away. Quick! A barber and your servant. You run, you fly, yet are too late—the husband has returned. Down pours the rain; nevertheless, you must dance attendance for an hour. Do you dare to fall sick, or even to become ill-humored? No, indeed. Sun and rain, cold and heat, uncertainty and danger exist only to make you a lusty blade. The northeast wind, as it bites your cheek, would be vexed if it did not think 'twould raise your spirits. Love is represented with wings and a quiver, but in truth 'twould be better pictured as a gunner for wild geese, in a waterproof jacket and with skull sheltered in an oilskin cap. What fools men are to refuse free banquets, to run after—pray, what?—after the shadow of their pride. But the garrison is stationed here six months; one cannot always be content in a café, and provincial actors are so tiresome. You look at yourself in a mirror, and then you no longer care to be handsome to no purpose. Jacqueline is shapely—

Enter Jacqueline.

Ah! my dear, what have you done? Have you followed my counsel, and are we out of danger?

Jacqueline.—Yes.

Capt.—How did you manage it? You must tell me. Is it one of M. André's clerks that is charged with our salvation?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—You are an incomparable woman; in cleverness without a peer. You had the young man brought, did you not, into your boudoir? I can see him now twirling his thumbs and fingering his hat. But what fairy-tale did you spring on him to succeed in so short a time?

Jacq.—The first that came into my head; I don't know.

Capt.—Just see what poor devils we are, and how easily ensnared when it pleases you to play the tempter. And our husband—how does he regard the matter? And the menacing lightning—does it already show the attraction of the lightning-rod? Has it begun to be deflected?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—By Jove! we'll have a pleasant time; and to me 'twill be better than a play to watch this comedy, its springs and action, and to play therein a rôle myself. Pray tell me, is the humble slave already head over heels in love since I left? I'll wager something handsome that I met him as I was coming up: a preoccupied look and manner mark the man. Is he already invested with his office? Does he perform the indispensable functions with facility? Does he carry your colors and place the screen before the fire? Has he yet dared to whisper some words of timorous love and respectful adoration? Are you pleased with him?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—And as payment on account for future service, these beautiful eyes that flash so brilliantly—have they already permitted him to surmise that he may sigh for them? Has he yet obtained any mark of favor? Come, tell me frankly, what have you done? what point have you reached? Is the youth engaged? It is well at least to encourage him for the service he will render us.

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—What's the matter with you? You are dreamy, and only half answer me.

Jacq.—I have done what you told me to do.

Capt.—And you regret it?

Jacq.—No.

Capt.—But you seem uneasy—as if something troubled you.

Jacq.—No.

Capt.—Is it possible that you regard this little joke seriously? Rid yourself of such thoughts; it's nothing.

Jacq.—If what has happened were known, why is it that the world would blame me, and perhaps excuse you entirely?

Capt.—Pshaw! 'tis only a jest, a mere trifle. Don't you love me, Jacqueline?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—Very well, then; what is there to be uneasy about? Didn't you do it to save our love?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—I assure you that it simply amuses me; I don't take such things to heart.

Jacq.—Hush! It is nearly dinner time, and I see M. André coming.

Capt.—Is that our man with him?

Jacq.—That's the man. At my husband's request he spends the evening with us.

Enter M. André and Fortunio.

M. André.—No, I won't listen to a word of business to-day. I want to see some lively dancing and hear merry laughter. I am in ecstasy; I tread on enchanted ground, and my only business will be a good dinner.

Capt.—By Jove! you appear to be in a jovial humor, M. André.

M. And.—I must tell you all that happened yesterday. I unjustly suspected my wife; I had the wolf trap placed before my garden door, and this morning found my cat in it. It serves me right; I deserve it; but I wish to do Jacqueline justice, and to announce that we have made up and that she has pardoned me.

Jacq.—That's all right; I don't bear malice. Kindly speak of it no more.

M. And.—No, I want everybody to know it. I've told it all around the city. I've brought with me a sugar statuette of Napoleon, which I intend to place upon my mantel as a token of reconciliation, and every time I look at it I shall love my wife more. That will insure me against all distrust in the future.

Capt.—'Tis the act of a good husband—an act worthy of M. André.

M. And.—Thanks, Captain. Won't you dine with us? We're having to-day a sort of celebration, and would be pleased to have you.

Capt.—You do me too much honor.

M. And.—Allow me to present a new guest—one of my clerks, Captain. Ha! ha! *cedant arma togæ*. No insult, of course—the little rogue is clever, and comes to court my wife.

Capt.—(To Fortunio.) May I ask your name, monsieur? Charmed to make your acquaintance.

M. And.—Fortunio. 'Tis a lucky name. To tell the truth, although he has been working in my study nearly a year, I hadn't at all perceived his merits. In fact, without the help of Jacqueline, I fear I never should have discovered them. His penmanship is rather poor, but my wife needs him for some little matters, and highly praises his zeal. 'Tis their secret; we husbands mustn't pry too deeply into such affairs. An amiable guest in a provincial city is a prize. I sincerely trust that he will find our company agreeable. We'll do our best to please him.

Fortunio.—And I will do all that I can to merit the honor.

M. And.—(To the Captain.) My work, you know, confines me to my apartments during the week. I am pleased to have Jacqueline amuse herself, without me, as she thinks proper. She needs an arm sometimes to promenade in the city; the doctor advises her to walk, and fresh air does her good. This young man knows all the news that is stirring, and reads aloud very nicely; besides, he comes of a very good family and is well bred. He will be a cavalier for my wife, and I ask you to favor him with your friendship.

Capt.—My friendship, worthy sir, is entirely at his service.
'Tis something you have acquired and may dispose of.

For.—The Captain is very kind. I don't know how to express my gratitude.

Capt.—Your hand! The honor is mine if you deem me a friend.

M. And.—Well, this is pleasant. Hurrah! Let's be merry. The festive board awaits us. Give your arm to Jacqueline, and come sample my wine.

Capt.—(Low, to Jacqueline.) M. André doesn't appear to look at things the way I thought he would.

Jacq.—(Low.) His confidence and his jealousy depend upon a word of the whispering wind.

Capt.—(Low.) If your husband views the matter in this light, we've no need of the clerk.

Jacq.—(Low.) I have done what you told me to do.

SCENE II.

M. André's study. William and Landry at work.

William.—It seems to me that Fortunio didn't stay here with us very long.

Landry.—They're celebrating in the house to-night, and M. André invited him.

Will.—Yes, and this means that we must do all the work. My right hand is paralyzed.

Lan.—And he is only the third clerk, too; they might have invited us also.

Will.—After all, he's a good fellow; there's no harm done.

Lan.—No; nor would there have been any more had we been invited to the feast.

Will.—Ah! what delicious odors! They're making such an infernal racket up stairs, you can scarcely hear yourself talk.

Lan.—I believe they're dancing; I saw some musicians.

Will.—Devil take the cursed papers! I'm not going to work on them any more to-day.

Lan.—Do you know, I've an idea there's something mysterious going on around here?

Will.—Pshaw! Do you think so?

Lan.—Yes, I do; and if I wished to gossip——

Will.—Don't be afraid; I won't repeat what you tell me.

Lan.—You will recall that I saw, the other day, a man slipping through the window. Who he was we never learned; but no later than this evening I saw something with my own eyes; and what that was I know very well.

Will.—What was it? Tell me.

Lan.—I saw Jacqueline, at dusk, open the garden door. A man was behind her. He crept along the wall, kissed her hand, and then skipped out; but I heard him distinctly say, "Fear nothing; I'll soon return."

Will.—Really! you must be mistaken.

Lan.—I saw him as plainly as I see you.

Will.—'Pon my word, if that's so, I know what I'd do in your place. I would tell M. André just what I saw and heard, as you did before.

Lan.—I'll have to think about that. With a man like M. André you run a risk. He changes his mind every day.

Will.—Hear what a racket they're making up there. Slam-bang the doors! Rattle and clatter the plates and bottles! Jingle and jangle the knives and forks! I think I hear some one singing.

Lan.—Yes, that's the voice of M. André himself. Poor old fellow! He's a laughing-stock for all of them.

Will.—Well, let's take a stroll and chat at our ease. 'Pon my word, when the master amuses himself, the least the clerks can do is to take a rest.
(They leave.)

SCENE III.

M. André's dining-room. M. André, Captain Clavaroche, Fortunio and Jacqueline at the table. Dessert has been served.

Captain.—Come, Monsieur Fortunio; fill madame's glass.

Fortunio.—With pleasure, Captain. I drink to your good health.

Capt.—For shame! You are not gallant. Drink to the health of madame.

M. André.—Of course; to the health of my wife. I am delighted, Captain, that you find this wine to your taste. (He sings.)

Capt.—Oh, that song is too old. You sing something, Monsieur Fortunio.

For.—If madame bids me.

Jacqueline.—Very well; sing, I beg you.

Capt.—One moment; before singing, try a little of this biscuit. It will clear your throat and raise your voice.

M. And.—The Captain must always have his little joke.

For.—Thanks; but I fear it would choke me.

Capt.—Well, then, ask madame to give you a piece. I feel sure that, coming from her white hand, it will appear light to you. (He looks under the table.) Gracious! what do I see? Your feet on the floor! Pray have a cushion, madame.

For.—(Rising.) Here is one, under this chair. (He places it under Jacqueline's feet.)

Capt.—Well, really, Monsieur Fortunio, I should have thought that you would have allowed me to do that. But a young man who pays court must not permit any one to fore-stall him.

M. And.—Ah! this fellow will make his way; he needs but a hint.

Capt.—Now, then, please sing. We are all attention.

For.—I dare not before such judges. I do not know any drinking songs.

Capt.—But you must sing, since madame bids you.

For.—I will do, then, the best I can.

Capt.—Have you not yet composed some lines in madame's honor? See, occasion offers.

M. And.—Hush! hush! Let him sing.

Capt.—A love-song; surely you will sing a love-song, will you not, Monsieur Fortunio? Nothing else, I beg. Pray, madame, command him to sing a love-song. One cannot live without love.

Jacq.—Pray do so, Fortunio.

For.—(Sings.)

Think you that I will tell you, now,
Whom I dare woo?
I for the world would not, I vow,
Tell that to you.

We'll sing in joyous roundelay,
If you will sing,
That she's my love, as fair and gay
As fields in spring.

Whate'er her fancy orders me,
That still do I.
Could death to her advantage be,
I'd gladly die.

Love, unrequited, to the heart
Such pains can give,
That I—so have I felt the smart—
Scarcely would live.

Yet is my love so great, that I
Would hide it ever;
I for my sweet would gladly die,
But name her—never!

M. And.—In truth the little rogue is really in love, as he says; there are tears in his eyes. Come, my boy, drink; 'twill brace you up. It must be some grisette in town who has presented you with this wretched gift.

Capt.—I do not believe that Monsieur Fortunio's ambition is so lowly: that song is worthy of some one better than a grisette. What is madame's opinion?

Jacq.—It's excellent. Give me an arm; we'll go and have our coffee.

Capt.—Quick, Monsieur Fortunio, offer your arm to madame.

Jacq.—(Takes Fortunio's arm. Low, as they are leaving:) Have you done my errand?

For.—Yes, madame; everything is in the study.

Jacq.—Go; await me in my room; I will rejoin you in a moment.
(They leave.)

SCENE IV.

Jacqueline's bedroom. Enter Fortunio.

Fortunio.—Is there a man happier than I? I am sure Jacqueline loves me; I cannot be mistaken, for she has given me too many signs and tokens of her love. Already I am well received in the house, entertained and pampered. At table she places me by her side; if she goes out, I accompany her. What gentleness! What a sweet voice and smile! When she fixes her eyes upon me, I thrill with I know not what emotion. I can scarcely breathe for joy, and would throw my arms about her neck if I did not restrain myself. The more I think about it, the more I reflect, the more certain I am she loves me. Yes, she loves me, and I should be a downright fool if I feigned not to see it. When I sang, a while ago, how brilliantly her eyes shone! Come, Fortunio, don't lose time. I'll place this box containing the jewels here; 'tis the secret errand, and Jacqueline surely will not tarry.

Enter Jacqueline.

Jacqueline.—Are you here, Fortunio?

For.—Yes, madame. Here is the casket and the jewels you commanded.

Jacq.—You are a man of your word, and I am very well pleased with you.

For.—How shall I express what I feel? One glance from your eyes has changed my fate, and I live only to serve you.

Jacq.—A little while ago you sang at the table a very pretty song. For whom was it composed? Will you kindly give me a copy of it?

For.—'Twas composed for you, madame. I am dying of love, and my life is in your hands. (He drops on his knees.)

Jacq.—Really, I was under the impression that your song declares we must never tell whom we love.

For.—Ah! Jacqueline, have pity on me. My suffering don't date from yesterday. For two years, under the shady boughs, my eye has traced your footsteps. For two years, without your having known, perhaps, of my existence, you have never gone in or come out, your flitting shadow has never appeared behind your curtains, you have not opened a window or stirred abroad, that I was not there—that I did not watch you. I dared not approach you, but your beauty, thank God! belonged to me as the beauty of the sun belongs to everybody. I sought it out, I breathed it, I lived by the shadow of your life. You passed the morning on the veranda; at night I went there to weep. A few words fallen from your lips reached me; I repeated them all one day. You cultivated flowers; my room was full of them. Evenings you sang at the piano; I knew your songs by heart. Everything you loved, I also loved. Everything that passed your lips intoxicated me. Alas! I see that you smile. God knows that my suffering is real, and that my life is in your hands.

Jacq.—I do not smile to hear you say that you have loved me for two years, but I smile when I think that it will be two days to-morrow.

For.—May you be lost to me if truth is not as dear to my heart as love! May you be lost to me if I have not for two years existed solely for you!

Jacq.—Rise. If any one should come, what would be thought of me?

For.—No. I shall not rise nor leave this place until you believe my words. If you refuse my love, do not, at least, doubt it.

Jacq.—Is it an enterprise you have undertaken?

For.—An enterprise full of fear, full of distress and of hope. I scarcely know if I am alive or dead, nor do I know how I dared to tell my love. I rave; but I also love and suffer. And you must know it, and pity.

Jacq.—Does he intend to remain an hour there—this obstinate and foolish child? Come, rise! I wish you to get up.

For.—Then you believe in my love?

Jacq.—No; I don't choose to believe it.

For.—'Tis impossible. You cannot doubt it.

Jacq.—Bah! I'm not so easily caught with three words of gallant chaff.

For.—Pray look at me. Who could have taught me to deceive? I am a child, born but yesterday—a child who has never loved any one save you, who ignore my love.

Jacq.—You court grisettes, I know.

For.—You are deceiving yourself. Who could have said such a thing?

Jacq.—Yes, you do; you go to balls and picnics.

For.—With my friends on Sundays. What harm is there in that?

Jacq.—As I told you yesterday, any man in your place would say as much. You are young, and, at an age when the heart is rich, the lips are never miserly.

For.—What must be done to convince you? Tell me, I beg.

Jacq.—'Tis pretty advice you ask! Well, you must prove it.

For.—Heavenly Father, I have but tears! Can tears prove love? What! while on my bended knees, overwhelmed with the burden of my woe, no longer able to contain myself, you remain cold and indifferent? Can I not transfer to you one spark of the fire that devours me? You even deny I suffer, when I am about to die at your feet. 'Tis more cruel than refusal—worse than disdain. Indifference itself can believe—

Jacq.—Get up! Some one is coming. I believe you; I love you. Leave by the small staircase. Wait below; I'll come.

(She leaves.)

For.—She loves me! Jacqueline loves me! With these words on her lips she left me. No, I cannot leave yet. Listen! some one is coming; some one has stopped her; they are coming here! Quick! I must leave. (He raises the tapestry.) Oh! the door is fastened outside; I cannot get out here. What shall I do? If I attempt to go down the other stairs, I shall meet them.

Captain.—(Outside.) Come on; why don't you come?

For.—It is the Captain that's coming up with her. I must conceal myself quickly and wait; I must not let myself be seen here. (He hides in an alcove.)

Enter Captain Clavaroche and Jacqueline.

Captain.—By Jove! madame, I've been hunting for you everywhere. What were you doing all alone?

Jacqueline.—(Aside.) Thank God! Fortunio has gone.

Capt.—You abandoned me to an insupportable tête-à-tête. What interest can I take in M. André, pray? And you left us together at the very moment when the sparkling wine of the husband must have made more delightful the charming conversation of the wife.

For.—(Concealed.) That's singular. What does it mean?

Capt.—(Opening the casket on the table.) Let's see. Rings, eh? What are you going to do with them—make a present?

Jacq.—You know our little scheme.

Capt.—But, by Jove, they are gold! If you count on using the same stratagem every day, our scheme will soon go bankrupt. By the way, that dinner amused me; and what a curious figure our young initiate cut!

For.—(Concealed.) Initiate! Into what mystery? Is he speaking of me?

Capt.—This chain is handsome—a costly jewel. That's a singular idea of yours.

For.—(Concealed.) Ah! it appears that he, too, is in Jacqueline's confidence.

Capt.—How he trembled, poor fellow, when he raised his glass. How amusing, too, with his cushions.

For.—(Concealed.) He is certainly speaking of me and of the dinner to-day.

Capt.—You will return it, I suppose, to the jeweller.

For.—(Concealed.) Return the chain? Why should she return it?

Capt.—His song, especially, delighted me; and, as M. André remarked, there really were tears in his eyes.

For.—(Concealed.) Am I dreaming or awake? Is it possible that Captain Clavaroche is—

Capt.—However, it is now unnecessary to push things farther. What use is an incommodious third person, if suspicion

no longer exists? These husbands never fail to become fond of their wives' lovers. See what has happened! As soon as you are trusted, we must extinguish the chandelier.

Jacq.—Who can tell what will happen? With such a person you're never sure of anything; and we must keep some one near at hand in case of need.

For.—(Concealed.) If they are making a plaything of me, there must be a motive. All these words are so many enigmas.

Capt.—I think you'd better dismiss him.

Jacq.—As you wish. But who can tell if to-morrow, to-night, perhaps within an hour, a storm will not break upon us? We must not place too much security in the present calm.

Capt.—You think—

For.—(Concealed.) Heavens! He is her lover!

Capt.—However, do as you like. Without throwing the young man over entirely, we must keep him in tow—but at a distance. Then, if the suspicions of M. André ever return, we'll have within easy reach your Monsieur Fortunio to turn them aside again. He strikes me as a hungry fish—fond of the hook.

Jacq.—It seems to me something moved.

Capt.—Yes; I thought I heard a sigh.

Jacq.—'Tis probably Madeline; she is working in the cabinet.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The garden. Enter Jacqueline and Madeline.

Madeline.—Madame, danger threatens you. Down stairs, a little while ago, I heard M. André talking with one of his clerks. As nearly as I could make out, their talk regarded an ambuscade which is to take place to-night.

Jacqueline.—An ambuscade! Where? For what purpose?

Mad.—In the study; the clerk declared that last night he saw you, madame, with a man in the garden. M. André swore by all that is holy that he would first surprise you, and then drag you before a court.

Jacq.—Are you not mistaken, Madeline?

Mad.—Madame, you can do whatever pleases you best. I have not the honor of your confidence, but that shall not prevent me, however, from doing you a kindness. My work is waiting.

Jacq.—Very well. You may depend upon my gratitude. Have you seen Fortunio this morning? Where is he? I must speak to him.

Mad.—He has not come to the study. The gardener, I believe, has seen him; but they need him badly, and just now were searching for him everywhere in the garden. Wait! here is M. William, the chief clerk, who is still searching for him; don't you see him yonder?

Enter William at the rear of the stage.

William.—Hello! Fortunio. Fortunio, hello! Where are you?
(He leaves.)

Jacq.—Go, Madeline, and see if you can find him.
(Madeline leaves.)

Enter Captain Clavaroche.

Captain.—What the devil has happened here? By Jove! I have some claim, I think, upon the friendship of M. André, and yet, when we met, he did not salute me. The clerks looked at me queerly, too, and I am not sure that the dog himself didn't feel tempted to snap at my heels. Pray what has happened, and why do they treat me thus?

Jacq.—It's no laughing matter. What I predicted has come to pass, and seriously, this time. 'Tis no longer a question of words, but of actions.

Capt.—Actions! What do you mean?

Jacq.—I mean that these cursed clerks are acting as spies, that they have seen us, that M. André knows it, that he intends to conceal himself in the study to-night, and that we are in great danger.

Capt.—That doesn't make you uneasy, does it?

Jacq.—Certainly. Would you wish anything worse? As we are warned, 'twill not be difficult to escape them to-day, but as soon as M. André acts without talking about it, we have everything to fear from him.

Capt.—Really, is this all? No more harm done than that?

Jacq.—Are you crazy? How can you joke on such a subject?

Capt.—Nothing easier than to get out of this scrape. M. André, you say, is furious? Well, let him rage; that needn't inconvenience us. He means to lie in ambush? Well, let him lie; nothing better. The clerks form part of the party? Well, let them form part, and everybody in the city with them, if they find it amusing. They desire to surprise the charming Jacqueline and her very humble servant? Well, let them surprise; I've nothing against it. What do you see in that to discommode us?

Jacq.—I don't understand what you're talking about.

Capt.—Get me Fortunio. Where has he hidden, this fellow? What! we are in danger, and the rascal abandons us? Come, advise him.

Jacq.—I didn't think of that. No one knows where he is; he has not appeared this morning.

Capt.—Pshaw! That's impossible. He must be somewhere about your petticoats, or you have laid him away in a wardrobe and forgotten him. Perhaps your maid has by mistake hung him on a hook.

Jacq.—Stop jesting. What use would he be to us? I asked where he is myself, without really knowing why. I cannot see, upon reflection, how he can serve us.

Capt.—Ha! Don't you see that I am getting ready to make the greatest sacrifice for him? 'Tis not a question of anything less than yielding to him all the privileges of love—for to-night.

Jacq.—For to-night? For what purpose?

Capt.—For the positive and practical purpose of not permitting the worthy M. André uselessly to pass the night under the blue blanket. You surely do not want these poor clerks, either, to have such a peck of trouble and then find no one. For shame! We cannot allow the hands of these honest people to remain empty. We must send them some one.

Jacq.—Oh, no! not that; find something else. 'Tis a horrible idea, and I cannot consent to it.

Capt.—Why horrible? Nothing is more innocent. You write Fortunio a word or two, if you cannot find him—for the shortest conversation is worth more than the longest letter—and under pretext of a rendezvous, get him to slip in to-night. Once in, the clerks surprise him, and M. André takes him by the collar. You descend in dishabille, and, the most natural thing in the world, ask the meaning of all the noise. They explain. Furiously, M. André now asks you why his young clerk sneaks into your garden. You blush a little at first, and then sincerely confess as much as you like—that the fellow visits your merchants, that he secretly brings you jewels; in a word, the simple truth. What is there so horrible in that?

Jacq.—They would not believe me. 'Twould have a pretty air of truth—a rendezvous at midnight to pay bills!

Capt.—Truth is always believed. It has an unmistakable accent which honest hearts never fail to recognize. Do you not in reality employ this young man in running errands?

Jacq.—Yes.

Capt.—Very well, then; since you do, say so; and take care that the proofs are in his pocket—a jewel case like that of yesterday—anything will suffice. And remember, if we don't employ this method, we'll be on pins and needles all the year. M. André lies in ambush to-day; to-morrow 'twill be another ambuscade, and so on until he surprises us. The less he finds, the more diligently will he seek. Make sure that he finds something once for all, and behold us, delivered.

Jacq.—'Tis impossible; I cannot think of it.

Capt.—A rendezvous in a garden is not, after all, such a very great sin. In fact, if you fear the night air, you need not go down at all. They'll simply find the young man, and he can easily crawl out of it. A pretty state of affairs, if a woman cannot prove herself innocent when she really is! Come, get your pad and take this pencil.

Jacq.—You surely don't mean it, Captain. It seems like a darstardly trap.

Capt.—(Handing her a pencil and paper.) Now write, please, "Meet me in the garden at midnight."

Jacq.—It's sending that child right into the trap—handing him over to the enemy. (She writes.)

Capt.—Don't sign; it's useless. (He takes the paper.) Frankly, my dear, 'twill be a cool night, and you will do better to remain at home. Permit this young man to promenade and enjoy the coolness of the night alone. I think also, as you, that 'twill tax their credulity to believe that he comes solely in the interests of your merchants. It will be better, if you are interrogated, to say that you know nothing of and have no part in the affair.

Jacq.—This note will testify—

Capt.—For shame! Do you think that we lovers would show the husband a note from his wife? What would we gain by it? Would we be likely to be thought less guilty because we had a partner in the crime? Besides, you can clearly see that your hand trembled a little, and that the handwriting is practically disguised. Now, then, I shall give this letter to the gardener, and 'twill soon be in Fortunio's possession. Come, the prey for the vulture is provided, and the bird of Venus, the gentle dove, may sleep securely on her nest. (They leave.)

SCENE II.

A shady grove.

Fortunio.—(Alone, seated on the grass.) To make a young man love her solely to place on his shoulders the suspicion fallen on another; to permit him to believe, yes, at need to say, she loves him; to trouble, perhaps, tranquil nights; to fill with doubt and deferred hope a young heart fit to suffer; to throw a stone into a lake whose surface has never known a ripple; to expose a man to suspicion, to all the dangers of illicit love, and yet grant him nothing; to rest inanimate and immobile in a matter of life and death; to deceive, to lie—lie from the bottom of her heart; to make a bait of her body; to play as with loaded dice, with all that is most sacred beneath the sun—'tis but a jest with woman.

(He rises.) This is your first step, Fortunio, in the apprenticeship of the world. Think, reflect, compare, examine and judge not in haste. This woman has a lover, whom she loves; she is suspected, tormented and threatened. She is ter-

ribly frightened, for she is, perhaps, to lose the man who fills her life, who is more to her than all the world beside. Her husband rises in haste, notified by a spy; he awakens her and threatens to drag her to prison. Her family will cast her off, the entire city will shun her; she will be undone and dishonored; yet she loves, and cannot cease loving. At any cost, she must have the sole object of her anxiety, of her anguish and pain. She must love if she is to live, and must deceive to love. She leans out of her window, sees a young man below. Who is he? She doesn't know, has never seen his face before. Is he good or bad, discreet or imprudent, cautious or rash? She doesn't know, but she knows she needs him, and so she calls. She adds a flower to her hair, and risks the happiness of his life upon the turning of a card—red or black.

Had she called William instead of me, as might easily have happened, what would have been the result? William is an honest fellow, but he has never yet perceived that his heart may serve another purpose than that of pumping blood through his veins. William would have been delighted to dine with his master and to sit beside Jacqueline at the table quite as much as I was delighted myself; but he would have fallen in love only with M. André's cellar. He would not have fallen on his knees nor listened at keyholes; 'twould have been for him clear gain. What harm would it then have been, had she used him, without his knowledge, to father her husband's suspicions? None. William would have calmly fulfilled the task she asked of him. He would have lived tranquil and happy for an age without seeing anything. Jacqueline would have been happy and tranquil also. She might have flirted a trifle with him, and he might have responded in the same spirit, but 'twould have been without further consequence. Everything would have passed off smoothly, and no one would need complain the day truth was made manifest.

(He sits down.) Why did she call me? Did she know then that I loved her? Why to me rather than to William? Was it chance or design? Perhaps in the depths of her being she suspected that I was not indifferent to her. Had she seen me at the window? Had she ever turned round while I watched her in the garden at night? But if she knew I loved her, why then? Because my love made her project easier to execute;

because I should fall into the snare at the slightest word. My love was but a happy chance—in it she saw but opportunity.

But is this certain? Was there nothing else? What! she knew that I should suffer, and thought only to profit by it? What! when she found me in quest of her, love in my heart and desire in my eyes, young and ardent, ready to die for her; and when, seeing me at her feet, she smiled and said she loved me, 'twas cold design, and nothing else? No truth, nothing real in that smile, in that pressure of the hand, in that voice which intoxicated me? Just God! if this be so, what monstrous being have I met? into what abyss have I fallen?

(He rises.) No; such abomination is not possible. No; a woman cannot be a malevolent statue at once alive and ice. No sooner shall I see her or hear her voice than I shall no longer believe in such a monstrous scheme. No; when she smiled upon me she did not smile because she loved, but smiled to see me love. When she gave me her hand she did not give her heart, but permitted mine to be given. When she said, "I love you," she meant to say, "Love me." No, Jacqueline is not wicked; there is neither design nor coldness. She lies, she deceives—she is a woman. She is coquettish, sarcastic and audacious, but not infamous, not heartless. Ah! fool, you love her—yes, you love her. You implore, you weep, and she laughs at you!

Enter Madeline.

Madeline.—Oh, thank goodness! I find you at last. Madame is in her room and wants you. Come quickly; she is waiting.

For.—Do you know what she wants of me? I cannot go now.

Mad.—Then you have business with the trees? She is very anxious; the whole house is upside down.

Enter Peter, the gardener.

Peter.—You're here, eh, monsieur? They're searching for you everywhere. Here's a note my mistress sent me a little while ago to give you.

For.—(Aside, reading.) "Meet me in the garden at midnight." (Aloud.) Is this from Jacqueline?

Peter.—Yes, monsieur; is there an answer?

Enter William.

William.—What are you doing, Fortunio? You're wanted in the study.

For.—I'm coming; I'm coming. (Low, to Madeline.) What were you saying just now? Why is your mistress anxious?

Mad.—(Low.) It's a secret. M. André is very angry.

For.—(Low.) Very angry? What about?

Mad.—(Low.) He has taken it into his head that madame is receiving some one secretly. You won't say anything about it, will you? He means to conceal himself to-night in the study. I discovered it all, and if I tell you, my stars! it's because I think you're not indifferent.

For.—(Low.) But why will he conceal himself in the study?

Mad.—(Low.) To surprise them and bring a suit.

For.—(Low.) Really, is it possible?

Peter.—Is there an answer, monsieur?

For.—I'll go myself. Come, let us leave.

SCENE III.

Jacqueline's bedroom.

Jacqueline.—(Alone.) No, it shall not be done. Who can tell what a man like M. André, impelled by violent passions, may not invent to revenge himself? I shall not send the youth to such dire peril. This Captain is pitiless. Everything to him is a battle-field, and he has no compassion in him. What is the use of exposing Fortunio, when it is much simpler not to expose him or any one else? I am willing to believe that by such means all suspicion will be allayed, but the trick is evil, and I am not willing to use it. No, it is too painful, too repulsive. I am not willing to have the youth ill-used. Since he declares he loves me—well, I shall not return evil for good.

Enter Fortunio.

Jacq.—Did you receive a note from me, and have you read it?

Fortunio.—Yes, I received and read it. You may dispose of me.

Jacq.—It's useless; I've changed my mind. Tear it up and say no more about it.

For.—May I not serve you in some other way?

Jacq.—(Aside.) It's singular he don't insist. (Aloud.) No, I don't need you. I asked for your song.

For.—Here it is. Is this all you desire?

Jacq.—Yes—I believe so. What's the matter? It seems to me that you're pale.

For.—If I cannot serve you further, permit me to retire.

Jacq.—I like your song very much. It has an ingenuous style about it that accords nicely with the man who composed it so well.

For.—You're very kind.

Jacq.—Well, you see I had at first an idea of sending for you, but I have reflected; it is folly; I yielded too readily. Go to the piano and sing your song.

For.—Excuse me; I cannot now.

Jacq.—Why not? Are you indisposed, or is it merely paltry caprice? I've a mind to ask you to sing whether you will or no. Am I not entitled to the lord of the manor's first rights upon that sheet of paper? (She places the song on the piano.)

For.—It's not unwillingness; I cannot remain any longer; M. André needs me.

Jacq.—But I'm rather pleased to get you scolded. Sit down and sing.

For.—If you insist, I must obey. (He sits down.)

Jacq.—Well, what are you thinking about? Are you waiting for some one to come?

For.—I am indisposed; do not keep me.

Jacq.—Sing first, and then we shall see if you are indisposed and if I shall keep you. Sing, I tell you; I wish it. You don't sing? Well, what's the matter? Come, now; sing, and I'll reward you with a—

For.—Stop! Jacqueline, listen to me. You would have done better to have told me all; I should have consented to everything.

Jacq.—What do you say? What are you talking about?

For.—Yes, you would have done better to have told me. Yes, before God! I would have done everything for you.

Jacq.—Everything for me? What do you mean by that?

For.—Ah! Jacqueline, Jacqueline, you must love him very much; it must be hard on you to lie, and to mock me so pitilessly.

Jacq.—I! Mock you? Who said so?

For.—I beseech you do not lie any more; we've had enough of that. I know everything.

Jacq.—But really, what is it you know?

For.—I was in your room yesterday when the Captain was there.

Jacq.—Is it possible? You were in the alcove?

For.—Yes, I was there. In the name of heaven, speak of it no more! (Both are silent a while.)

Jacq.—Since you know everything, monsieur, all that remains to me is to beg silence. I am sufficiently sensible of the wrong I have done you not to even attempt to diminish it in your eyes. What necessity commands and what happens in consequence, another, perhaps, might appreciate and might therefore excuse, even if he could not pardon, my conduct; but you, unfortunately, are too deeply involved to judge indulgently. I am resigned and await my fate.

For.—Fear nothing. I would rather have my right hand cut off than do anything that might harm you.

Jacq.—I trust in your words, nor have I any right to question them. Indeed, I must admit that, should you forget them, I would have still less right to complain. My imprudence must bear its punishment. It was without knowing you that I addressed myself to you. If this circumstance makes my fault less, it makes the danger more; and since I expose myself to this danger, do with me as you will. Some words of yesterday require, perhaps, an explanation; but, not being able to justify myself entirely, I prefer to remain entirely silent. Permit me to believe that your pride alone is offended. If this be so, may these two days be forgotten. Later we'll talk them over.

For.—Never. 'Tis my heart's desire.

Jacq.—As you wish. I must obey. If, however, I am no longer to see you, I wish to add a word. Personally, I've nothing to fear from you, since you promise silence; but there is another whose presence in this house might lead to unpleasant results.

For.—I've nothing to say on that subject.

Jacq.—Pray listen to me. A clash between you and this person, you will readily understand, would be my undoing. I will do anything to prevent it. Whatever you exact I will submit to without a murmur. Do not leave me without reflecting upon it. Dictate your conditions. Must the person of whom I speak stay away from here for some time? Must he beg your pardon? Whatever you deem proper will be received by me as mercy, and by him as duty. Some pleasantries I recall oblige me to ask enlightenment on this point. What do you decide? Answer.

For.—I exact nothing. You love him. May you dwell in peace as long as he loves you!

Jacq.—Kindly receive my thanks for both promises. Should you repent, every condition imposed by you will be fulfilled, and you may depend upon my gratitude. Is there anything I can now do to repair the wrong I have done you? anything within my power to oblige you? Although you ought not, perhaps, believe me, I must confess that I would do anything in the world to leave with you a more favorable impression of me. What can I do? I am yours to command.

For.—Nothing. Good-bye, madame. Be without fear; you shall never have cause to complain of me.

(He starts to leave, and takes his song.)

Jacq.—O Fortunio! leave me that.

For.—And what, cruel woman, would you do with it? You have talked for a quarter of an hour, and nothing from your heart has passed your lips. You talked of excuses, of sacrifices and of reparations; of your Captain and his foolish vanity; you even talked of my pride. You think, then, that you have wounded it? You think, then, that I am grieved simply to have been taken for a dupe and chaffed at that dinner? Pshaw! I don't even remember it. When I declared my love, you think then that I felt nothing? When I spoke of my two years of suffering, you think then that I spoke as you speak? What! you break my heart, you pretend to repent, and thus you cast me off. Necessity, you say, caused you to commit a fault which you now regret; you blush and turn your head; you pity my suffering; you see and comprehend your work—

the wound you have made—and this is the way you would cure it! Ah! 'tis of the heart, Jacqueline, and you had but to offer your hand. I swear, if you had so desired, however disgraceful it may be to confess, and although you may laugh at it, I was capable of consenting to everything. O God! my strength fails me. I cannot leave. (He leans on a table.)

Jacq.—Poor child! I am very much at fault. Here, smell these salts.

For.—Ah! save them, save them for him, these attentions of which I am not worthy. They are not for me. I haven't an inventive mind; I'm neither skillful nor clever. I cannot, upon occasion, fabricate a profound stratagem. Fool! I believed I was loved—yes, because you smiled upon me; because your hand trembled in mine; because your eyes seemed to seek my eyes, and like two angels invite them to a festival of joy and life; because your lips opened and vain sounds intoxicated me. Yes, I confess I dreamed, and I believed this—love! What folly! Was it on parade that your smile felicitated me upon the beauty of my horse? Was it sunlight dancing on my helmet that dazzled your eyes? I came out of an obscure office from whence I had followed for two years your walks in a shady grove. I was a poor clerk who shed his tears in silence. And such an object hoped to inspire love!

Jacq.—Poor child!

For.—Yes, poor child. Say it again, for I know not if I dream or wake, and, in spite of all, if you do not love me. Since yesterday, seated on the ground, I have beat my breast and racked my brain. I recall what my eyes have seen, what my ears have heard, and ask myself if it is possible. At this very moment, when you have just told me, when I feel my suffering, when I am dying from its effects, I cannot believe, nor can I comprehend it. What have I done to you, Jacqueline? How is it possible that, without a motive, without feeling for me either love or hatred, without knowing me, without ever having seen me, you, loved by all; you, so kind to the beggar on the street; you whom I have seen tend these flowers with such gentle care; you, that believe in a God; to whom never—Oh! I'm accusing you—you, whom I love more than life. Oh, heaven! have I dared to reproach you? Jacqueline, pray pardon me.

Jacq.—Calm yourself; come, calm yourself.

For.—And what am I good for, great God! if not to give you my life? if not for the humblest use you can make of me? if not to follow your footsteps, to preserve you, to brush every thorn from your path? I dare to pity myself, and you had chosen me! I had a place at your table, and was going to count in your existence. You were about to tell these gardens, these lawns, the whole of nature to smile like you upon me. Your beautiful and radiant image beckoned me on: I was going to live. Must I really lose you, Jacqueline? Have I done something for which you must drive me away? Why will you not still simulate love for me? (He falls to the floor in a faint.)

Jacq.—(Running to him.) Heavenly Father! what have I done? Fortunio, recover yourself.

For.—Who are you? Let me leave.

Jacq.—Support yourself; come to the window. Please lean on me. Put this arm on my shoulder, Fortunio, I beg you.

For.—It's nothing. I'm all right.

Jacq.—(Aside.) How pale he is! How his heart beats! (Aloud.) Let me bathe your temples. Take this cushion and this handkerchief. Am I so odious to you that you refuse?

For.—Thank you; I feel better.

Jacq.—How icy cold these hands are! Where are you going? You cannot go out. Wait a moment, if no longer. Since I have made you suffer so much, permit me at least to take care of you.

For.—It is unnecessary. I must go down. Pray pardon what I have said. I was not master of my words.

Jacq.—What have I to pardon? Alas! it is you who do not pardon. But what hurries you? Why leave me? You seem to be looking for something. Don't you recognize me? Remain quiet, I beg. By the love you bear me, Fortunio, I beg you do not leave the room yet.

For.—No; good-bye; I cannot remain.

Jacq.—Oh! I have done you a great wrong.

For.—They were asking for me when I came up. Good-bye, madame. Depend upon me.

Jacq.—Shall I see you again?

For.—If you wish.

Jacq.—Will you come up to the drawing-room this evening?

For.—If you desire.

Jacq.—Are you really going? One moment.

For.—Good-bye; good-bye; I cannot remain. (He leaves.)

Jacq.—(Alone, calling.) Fortunio, listen to me.

Reënter Fortunio.

Fortunio.—What do you want with me, Jacqueline?

Jacq.—Listen to me. I must speak to you. I am not going to ask you to pardon me, nor shall I refer in any way to the past. I am not going to justify myself. You are good, brave and sincere. I have been false and unfaithful. I don't want to leave you thus.

For.—I forgive you with all my heart.

Jacq.—No, you are suffering; the evil is done. Where are you going? What are you about to do? How is it that, knowing everything, you have come back here?

For.—You sent for me.

Jacq.—But you came to tell me that I should see you at the rendezvous. Would you have come?

For.—Yes, if it was to do you good. And I confess to you that I thought it would.

Jacq.—Why to do me good?

For.—Madeline told me something——

Jacq.—You knew it, poor soul! and yet you would have come?

For.—The first word that I ever said to you was that I would gladly die for you, and the second, that I never lied.

Jacq.—You knew it, and you were coming? Think what you say. It was a dastardly trap.

For.—I knew everything.

Jacq.—You were to be surprised; to be killed, perhaps; dragged to prison; I know not what. It is horrible even to mention.

For.—I knew everything.

Jacq.—You knew everything?—everything? You were concealed, then, yesterday, behind the curtain. You were listening, were you not? You knew everything, did you not?

For.—Yes.

Jacq.—You knew that I lied to you, that I deceived you, that I mocked you, and that I meant to kill you? You knew

that I loved the Captain, and that he made me do everything he wished? That I was playing a part; that there, yesterday, I had made you my dupe; that I am base and contemptible; that I exposed you to death at my pleasure? You knew everything; you were sure of it? Well, what do you know now?

For.—Jacqueline, I believe—I know—

Jacq.—Do you know that I love you, child as you are? that you must pardon me or I shall die? and that I ask it of you on bended knees?

SCENE IV.

M. André's dining-room. M. André, Captain Clavarache, Fortunio and Jacqueline at the table.

M. André.—Thank heaven, here we are—all joyful, all united and all friends. If I ever doubt my wife again, may wine poison me!

Jacqueline.—Please fill my glass, Monsieur Fortunio.

Captain.—(Low, to Jacqueline.) I repeat that your clerk wearies me exceedingly. Do me the kindness to get rid of him.

Jacq.—(Low, to the Captain.) I am doing what you told me to do.

M. And.—When I think that yesterday I spent the whole night in the study, chilled to the bone, and all on account of a cursed suspicion, I hardly know what name to call myself.

Jacq.—Monsieur Fortunio, please give me that cushion.

Capt.—(Low, to Jacqueline.) Do you think me another M. André? If your clerk does not leave the house, I myself shall leave.

Jacq.—I am doing what you told me to do.

M. And.—But I've told all about it to everybody. Justice must be done here below. Yes, everybody in town must know just what I am, and henceforth, as penance, I shall doubt nothing whatsoever.

Jacq.—Monsieur Fortunio, I drink to your love.

Capt.—(Low, to Jacqueline.) That's quite enough, Jacqueline, and I clearly comprehend what it means. That is not what I told you to do.

M. And.—Yes, to Fortunio's love. (He sings.)

Fortunio.—That song is very old. You sing something, Monsieur Clavarache.

A HAPPY DAY

(UNE JOURNÉE DE BONHEUR)

OF

PAUL DE KOCK.

(Translated by W. H. H. Chambers.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M. GRANGINET, a Wealthy Bachelor.

M. BODINOT, a Happy Father.

MADAME BODINOT, his Wife.

ANTONY, their Son.

CLEOPATRA, the Baby.

NANETTE, their Maid.

MADAME DE LAMIGNON.

JOSEPHINE, a Maid.

MADAME TRINQUART.

FÉLICITÉ, her Servant.

CONDUCTOR OF AN OMNIBUS.

CABMAN.

And various other people including a country-woman, a match-girl, a couple of porters, a concierge or two, some passers-by, an errand-boy, etc.

ARGUMENT.

M. Granginet, an elderly, foppish Parisian epicure, starts out one fine afternoon for a stroll, promising himself a good meal at some friend's house. In the street he meets with various accidents which disarrange his careful toilet. One lady-friend is out, another sick; finally he arrives late, as he thinks, and in a dripping perspiration, at a friend's, only to find nothing prepared. His attempts to sing to satisfy his now ravenous appetite and various little mishaps are related in Paul de Kock's most characteristic vein.

Granginet.—This devilish sidewalk; I nearly fell again. Since they've been put down, I can't understand how I've failed to break my neck. They're not high enough above the level of the street, and often I can't see the devilish things—frequently, too, coachmen are driving all over them—and then they're entirely too narrow—every second or two you've got to stop—or bump your nose into somebody's face. There! didn't I say so?

A Passer-by.—Look out what you're doing, won't you?

Gran.—(Holding his nose.) Look out!—he's charming, that fellow!—first he smashes in my whole face, and then he does the complaining himself.

A Porter carrying a glass.—Take care!

Gran.—(Frightened and believing a horse is upon him.) Great heavens! (He leaves the sidewalk; a carriage nearly runs him down.)

Coachman.—Look out—

Gran.—The devil! here's another one upon me. (He tries to cross the street, an omnibus bars him.) It's ridiculous—there's too many carriages in Paris, anyway—you can't decently walk about. Well, it's all the same to me, I'm going back on that sidewalk and cede not an inch to anyone—the gutter, too, flooded by this morning's storm—I've no desire to be spattered all over with filth. (He stops before a restaurant window.) Hum! that smells first rate—it's a fine layout—those shrimps look nice and fresh—I must treat myself to some, one of these days—ah! I wonder what sort of a fish this is? (He takes his eyeglass to look more closely at the fish, and as he stoops over, a boy with a basket of wine bumps into him.) Take care where you're going, you idiot!

Boy.—Idiot yourself!—only think, there he stands with his mouth wide open, gloating over some fish—he's got to have spectacles, also, to believe his eyes.

Gran.—(Starting off.) You gutter-snipe!—this settles it; I'm going to take the inside of this pavement and not give an inch—let others look out for themselves. (He comes face to face with a lady, she stops, finds he will not yield, so takes the outside; a passing carriage bespatters her with mud.)

The Lady.—The men of to-day are far from being gentlemen.

Gran.—(While walking away.) So much the worse; but I certainly don't want to be spattered—I'm going to make some calls to-day and I've made my toilet carefully; it's quite enough to have had my hat battered in—and then to do the polite in the streets of Paris—why, you couldn't go four steps without stopping—that would be amusing when you're in a hurry. Certainly, I'm very gallant in a drawing-room, but here, *non est lic locus*; no, this isn't the place; I'm sorry I didn't think of that in time to fire at the lady. (He stops before a music store.) Anything new, I wonder? "I Dare Not Name Her," by Berat—that must be pretty—he does that sort of thing well, Berat—I must buy it, if I find it's within my

compass—I made quite a hit with his “Little Shepherds.” (He hums:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound of our bagpipes—

(A plasterer brushes against him and smears him with dry lime.) Some more, now, eh—it's very amusing! There doesn't seem to be any way to keep looking decent for an hour in Paris—fortunately, I brought my clothesbrush with me. (He enters a doorway, draws from his pocket a little clothesbrush about four inches long, carefully brushes the lime from his clothes and touches up his hat. He replaces the brush, leaves the doorway and promenades. Three young men occupying, arm in arm, the whole sidewalk, and smoking large cigars, soon meet him. He seeks to break through, but they hold fast and blow clouds of smoke in his face; he is obliged to leave the sidewalk and to listen to their mocking laughter as they pass on.) Pah! I fairly stink of their tobacco—without that smoke I certainly never would have surrendered the sidewalk—now I'm afraid people will think I've been in a gin-mill—and that's entirely out of my line. (Perceiving a lady.) Ah! it's Madame de Lamignon—Madame, do me the honor to accept my homage.

Madame de Lamignon.—Good-day, Monsieur Granginet, and how do you find your health?

Gran.—You're very kind, I thank you—so-so, la-la—you're taking a stroll?

Mad. de L.—Yes, my doctor says I don't go out enough—I've frightful pains in my head—insomnia, and cramps in my stomach.

Gran.—No one would suspect it—you're always fresh and rosy—always pretty—and you don't change a particle.

Mad. de L.—Ah! you're too kind, sir, in truth—but I mustn't hinder you longer. Good-bye, Monsieur Granginet, good-bye 'till we meet again—I'm charmed to have had the pleasure of meeting you.

Gran.—Mine, Madame, is the pleasure and the honor—with all my heart, Madame. (Aside, as he leaves.) Great heavens, how she's changed!—she looks ghastly, hollow-eyed, waxy and

bloated—such an affected coquette; I believe she still thinks she's only twenty. Let me see: I'll go to Madame Darbelle's, she's asked me more than a hundred times to dine with her—to-day I'll accept. She sets a good table, and, moreover, loves music. We'll sing after dinner. (He moves along more briskly and hums:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound of our bagpipes
No longer is—

Bodinot.—(Stopping and slapping Granginet familiarly on the back.) Hello, there! my dear old friend—where are you running to like this?

Gran.—Ah! how fares it, Bodinot?

Bod.—Always dudish, eh, Granginet?—always looking as if you just stepped out of a band-box—anyone can easily see you're a bondholder; that you've nothing to do.

Gran.—Nothing to do?—the phrase trips lightly on the tongue, but, in the first place, I've a tooth to be pulled—it's painful, and interferes horribly with my singing.

Bod.—Say, by the way, my wife has been confined—I have a daughter, did you know it?

Gran.—Great Scott! if I knew it! You've already told me three times—your daughter must be—

Bod.—She will be seven months old in two weeks—a superb child—grows like a mushroom; but then, you see, my wife nurses—just at present she has the whooping-cough.

Gran.—Your wife?

Bod.—No, the little one, my Cleopatra—we call her Cleopatra—pretty name, isn't it?

Gran.—Well, it's rather weighty, don't you think?

Bod.—You see, I had an object in choosing that name; I've a son named Antony, so when I speak of my children, I say, have you seen Antony and Cleopatra?

Gran.—Your wife, is she still devoted to music?

Bod.—She has so little time; when one nurses—of course, you can understand—everything has to give way to the kid—

Cleopatra is already so interesting—I'm going to make her an excellent musician; I believe she'll have a fine voice.

Gran.—Ah! you've already remarked that.

Bod.—You don't seem to marry, Granginet—you remain a bachelor. Ah! my old friend, if you but knew what domestic happiness really is!

Gran.—I find you thinner, however, and paler than ordinary.

Bod.—I haven't slept much for the last ten days or so—the little one cries nearly all night—then, you see, I must get up and walk the floor—my wife, you know, couldn't stand it, and the nurse girl is so terribly awkward—it's only temporary, though.

Gran.—I'm on my way to Madame Darbelle's, who gives such charming parties, and where I sang, you remember, with your wife, that nocturne of—

Bod.—And my son, you haven't seen him for a long time—Oh! you wouldn't recognize him—he's a rascal—as pretty as a picture and smart—sharp as a steel trap—he knows by heart the fables of La Fontaine. I look after his education myself.

Gran.—Permit me to congratulate you—but I must leave, I promised to try a piano at—

Bod.—You can't get away from me so easy—you must promise to come and dine with me—no ceremony, you know; to-day's as good a time as any—promise you'll come to-day.

Gran.—I cannot, I must dine at—

Bod.—Bah! you won't go; you'll come as I ask; pity if an old friend can't have the preference. We've a capon sent us from Mans.

Gran.—Oh! it isn't for that I should come.

Bod.—Never mind, what's the difference; you're fond of capon, I know—and my wife will add a dainty or two—come, it's understood, I shall rely on you—you'll see Antony and Cleopatra.

Gran.—My friend, I cannot definitely promise—if I can possibly—

Bod.—Yes, yes, you'll come; we dine precisely at five; you

know at my house we're exactitude itself—mind, at five sharp we'll expect you.

Gran.—But, my dear fellow, I don't want you to definitely expect me—if I can—I—

Bod.—Good-bye, I'll see you later—at five, sharp—it's understood.

Gran.—(Calling after Bodinot, as he rapidly leaves.) But, I tell you—he doesn't hear me—it's too bad to be wanted everywhere—all my friends desire to have me—well, I'll go, if I can—that capon from Mans is rather seductive, but Bodinot makes me very tired with those kids of his—he don't seem to be able to talk of anything else. Singular, when you come to think of it, a man is no sooner the father of a family than he apparently thinks he has the right to wear out all his acquaintances with endlessly repeating: my son has done this—my daughter has said that. I sincerely hope that if I ever have any youngsters, I'll not be such a blanked fool. Ah! here's where Madame Darbelle resides. (He enters the house and addresses the Concierge.)

Concierge.—You wish to see Madame Darbelle? Third floor, first door to the right.

Gran.—I know the door; I wish simply to know if she has visitors.

Concierge.—Visitors? visitors? first door to the right.

Gran.—(Going up stairs.) Right, I know it's to the right—I think that Concierge is a little cracked—living with a parrot must have affected his mental faculties—but here I am. (He rings; a young girl opens the door.) Good-day, my pretty Josephine, Madame Darbelle is at home, is she not?

Josephine.—(Has an embarrassed air and prevents his entering.) No, Monsieur, Madame is not home; she has gone out to dine and will not return 'till late—I'm sorry, Monsieur.

Gran.—(Pushing against the door Josephine is shutting in his face.) What, not at home? gone out to dine?—how vexatious! I came expressly to dinner.

Jos.—(Quickly.) Madame will be so sorry. She hardly expected to go out at first, then she said: "I don't believe anybody's coming to-day and I might just as well dine out." She hasn't been gone more than ten minutes—good-bye, Monsieur.

Gran.—(Pushing against the door.) If it hadn't been for that Bodinot I wouldn't have missed her—he kept me an hour or more in the street, talking about his kids—and your porter might at least have told me Madame Darbelle is not home; that would have saved me this long walk up stairs—well, present my compliments to Madame.

Jos.—I shall not fail, sir. Five minutes earlier and you'd have found—— (The door closes.)

Gran.—(On the street again.) Hum, I wonder why Josephine was so anxious to get rid of me and so afraid I might enter—I thought I caught a glimpse, on a chair, of a soldier's cap—hum, Mademoiselle Josephine was not alone; I'll certainly tell her mistress of my observations and the way she pushed me more and more into the entry and finally shut the door in my face. Nevertheless, I feel I shall dine well to-day. My appetite has already announced itself—by Jove! I'm not a great distance from the house of my good friend, Madame Trinquart—I believe I'll dine with her. The good lady, with her seventy years, begins to drivel a little—her upper story never was very well furnished—but she treats you well. She often has company—it's only four o'clock, I've time to present myself. (He hurries and hums:)

Tra la la, tra la la—the sound of our bagpipes——

A little girl.—Monsieur, buy some toothpicks——

Gran.—I don't want any—I never use them—they spoil the teeth.

Little girl.—Monsieur, a whole package for a penny—buy them, sir; they'll bring you good fortune.

Gran.—I tell you I don't want any, and I forbid you to put them in my hand.

Little girl.—Only one penny, sir—do not refuse me, my good Monsieur; we've seven little ones at home and we—— (To escape the girl he quickens his steps, darts across the street, and, in jumping the gutter, bespatters himself with mud.)

Gran.—It seems that all the fakirs in the universe are bent upon forcing their wares on me—and here I am splashed clear up to the eyes with mud—I'll have to wait 'till it dries before

I can brush it off—by Jove! I'm unlucky to-day—Oh, well! anyone can see it's an accident. Ah! I've arrived. (He enters the house and addresses the porter.) Is Madame Trinquart at home?

The porter.—Yes, Monsieur, I think so.

Gran.—Ah! that's fortunate. (He walks up stairs.) This time I'm all right. (He rings; the old servant, Félicité, appears.) Is Madame Trinquart at home and to be seen?

Félicité.—Yes, Monsieur, Madame is in the salon; will you kindly enter?

Gran.—(Aside.) At last I haven't taken a trip for nothing. (He enters the salon; an old lady is lying on a divan.) Good-day, Madame Trinquart, how do you find your health? Not poorly, I hope, and mine?—Oh! so-so, la-la, I thank you.

Madame Trinquart.—(In a trembling voice.) Good-day, my dear Monsieur Granginet—how pleased I am to see you—take a seat.

Gran.—(Sitting down.) Don't disturb yourself, I beg. I've been intending to call on you for ever so long—but I have so many engagements—this morning, however, I said to myself: I must call on Madame Trinquart this very day—and here I am.

Mad. T.—You must find me greatly changed.

Gran.—Changed? Why, no—Oh! a trifle pale, perhaps—have you been under the weather?

Mad. T.—Very much, my dear friend, a sort of bilious fever, but, thank heaven, it's about over—I've just taken my second dose of—

Gran.—You've taken a dose—this morning?

Mad. T.—Just awhile ago—you see, I slept late, my maid dared not awaken me—Félicité, bring me my gruel.

Fél.—(At the door.) Yes, Madame.

Gran.—(Biting his lips.) Ah! you are—have been indisposed—it's too bad.

Mad. T.—Did you come to dinner?

Gran.—Oh!—no—I cannot have that pleasure to-day.

Mad. T.—And why not?—I'm quite alone, you see; you can keep me company, and then— (She rises.) Pardon me,

Monsieur Granginet, I've got to leave you a few minutes—permit me—there is no need of ceremony among old friends—you, of course, divine that—

Gran.—Oh! go at once, Madame Trinquart—I should be very sorry to think that my presence—Certainly. (When he is alone.) No, assuredly I'll not dine here. That would be amusing. Perhaps it's only a prejudice, but I dislike to dine with anyone who has taken a dose of—Somehow it seems to take away all my appetite—I'm sorry I came here—phew! more than half-past four and I'm a deuce of a ways from Bodinot's, where they dine at five, sharp. Ah! I'll take the 'bus, that will land me within a stone's throw of his house. Isn't she ever coming back, this old woman? I ought to be away now. (He gets up.) My blood will be boiling pretty soon. (He walks impatiently about.) I can't very well leave before she returns—it would be impolite. (He hums:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound—the sound—the sound—

I can't stand this much longer—the time's getting shorter and shorter—first thing I know I'll lose my dinner at Bodinot's. What the devil is she doing, anyway, the cussed old woman? Is it possible she's taking a third dose of—

Fél.—(With a bowl.) Madame, here's your gruel—why, where is she?

Gran.—(Picking up his hat.) Ah! Félicité, I feel that my presence at this time is most unfortunate. You will kindly say to Madame Trinquart that I am truly distressed to think I chose my day so badly—I shall take pleasure in calling again very soon—kindly say good-bye to—

Fél.—But, Monsieur, you can certainly wait 'till—

Gran.—(Leaving.) Present my compliments—I shall return. At last, I'm out of that scrape. (He runs rapidly down the stairs, sees an omnibus, catches it and gets in.) By Jove! I made good connections. Conductor, where's a seat?—I don't see any.

Conductor.—Make room there on the left.

Gran.—(Sitting down between a fat woman and a small man.) Pardon, by crowding a little—I don't understand why the omnibus company don't divide the seats, then one could

always see an empty place. Here, conductor. (He hands him six sous.) For one.

Cond.—Anybody can see it isn't for two.

Gran.—(Withdrawing his feet, on which a woman has placed her umbrella.) This woman apparently takes me for a sidewalk—and the omnibus crawls along at a snail's pace.

A man.—(At the far end.) Conductor, stop here. (The omnibus stops.)

Gran.—Good! someone's getting out—we won't be so jammed together. There's a stinking melon somewhere in this 'bus—phew! how it stinks. (The man gets out, the omnibus starts again.) There's a fellow that don't believe in putting himself out for anybody. He leaned on everyone's knees on his way out. Heavens! but we're crawling—I'm sure to be late at Bodinot's. (The omnibus stops.) What the devil's the matter now?

Cond.—Come, push up there on the left—make room for two.

Gran.—Ah! where can he put them? (A lady and a country woman carrying a large basket get in; the country woman sits so tightly jammed against him as to be almost on his knees.) Take care, Mademoiselle, you're driving that basket right into my stomach—you ought not to be allowed to get in with such a basket—ouch! put it down, I beg you.

Country woman.—Be careful, there's eggs in it—they're easily broken. I prefer to hold them.

Gran.—But you're not holding them—they're on me. Put them somewhere else or I'll smash them with my fist.

Country woman.—Goodness gracious! because I'm from the country, you don't want to give me the least little bit of room—these Paris dudes—

Gran.—(Aside.) Calls me a dude because I won't let her make my stomach black and blue—but where the devil are we, anyway? I don't recognize the boulevard. Conductor, are we near the Saint-Denis gate?

Cond.—What! the Saint-Denis gate? We're going to Vaugirard.

Gran.—To Vaugirard! heavens! unlucky fellow that I am!

I mistook the omnibus—with this exchanging you can't recognize them any more. Stop it, conductor, stop it immediately. (He gets out.) It's too bad, here I am on Du Bac street, and Bodinot lives near the Saint-Denis gate. (He looks at his watch.) Five minutes to five—what the deuce shall I do? I see a cab in the square over yonder—that's my only chance; by driving quickly I can get there before the quarter of an hour's indulgence is up. (He runs to the cab.) Come, cabby, be lively; I'm in a hurry.

Cabman.—Here we are, sir; where are you going?

Gran.—(Gets in the cab.) Chessboard street, near the Saint-Denis gate. Drive quick—I'll give you a good tip.

Cab.—(Hiccoughing.) Oh! we'll (hic) go lively. Get up (hic), my dancer. (He whips his horse with a stick, on which only three inches of the lash remains. The horse kicks up his heels and goes slower than a donkey.)

Gran.—Made expressly for me! a bone-yard, a drunken cabby and a broken whip! What have I done to-day that fate so pursues me? Come, come, cabby, we're not moving—why the devil have you got a broken whip?

Cab.—Broke it (hic) on purpose. Fits my dancer better.

Gran.—Your dancer doesn't seem to want to get off a walk, even. Look out, there, cabby, you'll run into some of those carriages.

Cab.—No danger (hic), I do it on purpose.

Gran.—What! you graze all the carriages on purpose? (Aside.) Heavens! the rascal's so drunk he can't sit up straight—and I didn't see it before getting in. I'll be a lucky fellow if I get to my destination without an accident—after all they say, there's a special god that protects drunkards. (The cab bumps violently into a big cart wheel.) Cabman, what do you mean; are you trying to kill me? Look to your duty—this is a question of my life. If you're not in a condition to drive, get down.

Cab.—Oh! let me alone (hic), it's on purpose.

Gran.—You run into big carts on purpose? Well, then stop, I'll get out.

Cab.—No, you don't understand'; the other one did it (hic) out of spite. He did it on purpose.

Gran.—Well, you ought to have given him room—don't you see your horse has stopped? Touch him up with that whip; give it to him.

Cab.—He recognizes the place—wine shop, where I (hic) stop sometimes. Get up, my dancer.

Gran.—(Looking at his watch.) Quarter past five—I should certainly have gone quicker afoot. Take care, cabman, you nearly ran over that man.

Cab.—Ah! on purpose, sir, they put themselves in front of the horse—they're jokers. Get up, my dancer. (He jabs the end of the stick into the flank of the horse.) You've got to go. (The cab hits another cab a violent blow.)

Gran.—I've got enough; stop, cabman, I want to get out.

Cab.—You're mistaken (hic), this isn't Chessboard street.

Gran.—I tell you I want to get out—I hope I'm my own master; I've business here.

Cab.—All right. (He stops his horse. Granginet gets out and gives him twenty cents.) And the tip for a drink?

Gran.—(Walking very quickly.) A tip for a drink! the rascal—he has the gall to demand that, in the condition he's in! If he didn't upset me it wasn't his fault—but I must hurry. At last I see the Saint-Denis gate—hum, what a vile part of the city for mud and crowded streets. (He arrives at the house of Bodinot, in a dripping perspiration and with muddy clothes. He goes up stairs and rings.)

Bod.—Ah! it's Granginet—bravo! it's very kind of you to come. Oh! I counted on you—I had announced your coming to my wife.

Gran.—My friend, I trust you will pardon me if I'm a little late—a whole host of things detained me, it seemed like fate—and just now a cussed cabman that ran into everything on the street—

Bod.—Oh! you're all in good time. My wife's nursing, you know—takes up a good deal of her time and prevents her overseeing the details of the dinner—you see, when you've always a baby in your arms, you can't look after a roast very successfully, and our girl, Nanette, isn't very well posted on

cooking yet—but we'll get along all right. Come in. (They enter a salon. There is a piano and a little fellow, six or seven years old, playing with tenpins, a jumping-jack and a rocking-horse.)

Gran.—By Jove! I'm pleased to see you're not sitting at the table yet; I greatly feared you were waiting. Ah! here's your dear little fellow.

Bod.—Yes, that's Antony. Come here, Antony, come quickly and say good-day to Monsieur. He'll show you how polite, obedient and clever he is. Antony, come at once when I call you. (The child doesn't move, simply raises his head and sticks out his tongue at his father.) Oh! you little rascal, making faces at your papa. (Whispers to Granginet.) Chock full of roguishness, that boy, but you'll see pretty soon. (To the boy.) Antony, be mannerly, speak to the gentleman.

Antony.—(Whining.) I'm hungry, I am.

Gran.—Not bad, that—he speaks quite apropos. But where is Madame?

Bod.—You'll see her shortly—she's probably occupied with Cleopatra. (Going to a door.) Eugénie, Monsieur Granginet has arrived—are you coming?

Madame Boudinot.—(Outside.) In a minute.

Bod.—But, sit down. My dear friend, when one raises one's own children, there's such a lot of things to be done; and also, so many things to enjoy. (The baby begins to cry.) Cleopatra is crying, I must see what's the matter. (He leaves.)

Gran.—The devil!—and I nearly broke my neck to get here, and soaked myself with sweat. I see no signs of any dinner. If I had known— (Antony hits him on the shins with a wooden tenpin ball.) Take care, you little— Put your tenpins on the other side—this isn't a nice place to play.

Ant.—I'm going to play here, I am.

Mad. B.—(Comes in with the baby in her arms.) Good-day, Monsieur Granginet, how are you?

Gran.—I'm delighted to see you, Madame. Oh! so-so, la-la; and you? You see, I accepted, without ceremony, your husband's kind invitation.

Mad. B.—That's right, I'm charmed to have you—but here's my baby, what do you think of her?

Gran.—Beautiful, a superb child—quite the picture of her mother. It's astonishing how much her eyes resemble yours.

Mad. B.—Just what everybody says—she has the whooping-cough, the poor dear!—it tires her so, and she can't eat anything; that is to say, she can't keep anything down.

Gran.—(Aside.) By Jove! I could eat something, and keep it down, too.

Bod.—(Returning.) My dear, don't we dine to-day?

Mad. B.—That's for Nanette to look after, for I don't intend to leave my child. (She calls.) Nanette.

Nanette.—(Outside.) Madame.

Mad. B.—Have you prepared the salad?

Nan.—(Outside.) Yes, Madame, I'm beginning to pick it over.

Gran.—(Aside.) The devil! she's only commenced to pick the salad. For what sins am I suffering to-day?

Mad. B.—The girl is so clumsy and dumb—doesn't know how to do anything—can't even look after a roast.

Bod.—Oh! she'll be all right—with time and lessons. Antony, come here, you little rascal. (He picks him up and holds him on his knee.) Ah! I knew I could make you mind. Recite one of La Fontaine's fables.

Ant.—What will you give me?

Bod.—I'll buy you a gingerbread—go on with the fable, the one you know best—“The Grasshopper and the Ant.”

Ant.—(In a sing-song tone.) The grasshopper having sung all summer—held in his bill a bit of cheese. When the storms of winter came—a bit of cheese—enticed by the odor—enticed—cheese—

Bod.—(Putting his son on the floor.) Not so bad, that; it's true, he mixes them up a little, but that shows he's got an active mind.

Gran.—Yes, he's very clever. How are you getting along with your music, Madame?

Mad. B.—I have so little time, though I love it as much as ever; but you, Monsieur Granginet, you still sing, of course?

Gran.—Oh! yes, I often sing at parties—in fact, I think my voice has grown better.

Bod.—Sing something for us while we're awaiting dinner. There's the piano.

Gran.—If you think that will give you pleasure, I am quite willing. (He sits at the piano.) Do you know "The Little Shepherds" of Frederic Berat?

Mad. B.—No, but I'm sure it must be pretty, for Berat's songs are always charming.

Gran.—I'll sing it. (He strikes a few chords, then sings:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound of our bagpipes
No longer is heard over mountain and plain:
The song that—

(Cleopatra has a violent coughing fit; the mother arises and walks the floor, with the baby, the father following; Antony thumps the legs of the piano with his jumping-jack. Granginet remains at the piano.)

Bod.—Poor child—nasty disease, the whooping-cough. Ah! at last it's over—pardon, Granginet; will you begin again—Master Antony, keep quiet, won't you.

Gran.—I'll start at the beginning—but kindly keep the boy from making so much noise.

Bod.—Oh! he won't bother you any more.

Gran.—I'll begin now. (He sings:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound of our bagpipes
No longer is heard over mountain and plain:
The song that echoed—

(Cleopatra has a fit of coughing more violent than the former one; the mother carries her out of the room, the father follows; Antony strikes Granginet in the back with his jumping-jack.) Let up, you little rascal—stop it, I tell you. If you don't stop it, I'll take that jumping-jack away from you. (Aside.) Great heavens, what a household!—past six o'clock and no dinner yet! (He leaves the piano.) I shan't sing again 'till I've had something to eat—I feel weak and hollow now. It's mockery to tell people, we dine precisely at five;

mind, five, sharp, and at six o'clock not to be at table. For a straw I'd skip out—do as I did at Madame Trinquart's.

Ant.—Say, come play tenpins with me, won't you?

Gran.—Don't bother me. (He goes to the window and looks out. Ten minutes go by, then Bodinot returns.)

Bod.—She's getting better—pardon me, my old friend, for running away, but you know what the whooping-cough is—you must have had it yourself.

Gran.—Possibly; I don't remember.

Bod.—Would you mind starting that song again?

Gran.—Well, not just now; to tell the truth, I'd rather dine—I'm terribly hungry.

Bod.—Oh! dinner will be ready in a moment or two. (He goes over to his son and begins to play with him.) Tra la la, tra la la—look here, I'll bet I can knock down more than you—I used to be a dabster at playing tenpins in my time.

Mad. B.—(Entering.) Gentlemen, dinner is served, are you ready?

Gran.—(Quickly taking her hand.) Quite, Madame; entirely yours to comamnd. (They go to the dining-room. Granginet finds himself placed between Madame Bodinot and Antony. She starts to serve the soup, when she suddenly stops and listens, holding the plate.)

Mad. B.—I thought I heard the baby crying.

Bod.—I thought I heard something, too—did you hear anything, Granginet?

Gran.—(Holding his arm ready to take the soup.) No, I didn't hear a sound.

Mad. B.—(Putting back the plate.) Yes, Cleopatra is certainly crying. Excuse me, but I must go and see what's the matter. (She leaves the table. Bodinot continues to listen. Antony makes little bread balls, which he throws into the plate of Granginet, who looks longingly at the soup.)

Gran.—(After waiting three minutes.) Say, Bodinot, if your wife isn't coming back, wouldn't it be a good idea for you to serve the soup?

Bod.—I'm not used to serving—I never could learn to carve.

Gran.—I don't think you need to know very much about carving to serve soup.

Bod.—'Pon my word, you're right—I'll risk it. (He serves. Granginet, while eating his soup, is pelted with numerous bread balls.)

Gran.—Your boy is a fine little fellow—but if he would kindly dispense with throwing those bread balls into my plate—

Bod.—Oh! that's only in sport—Antony, don't be naughty.

Gran.—The soup tastes a trifle smoky.

Bod.—Well, what can you expect, when my wife nurses—she can't look after everything—but I wonder why she don't return? (He rises.) Excuse me, my friend, I must go to see what has happened to Cleopatra. (He leaves. Antony, left alone with Granginet, begins to play with his neighbor's knife and fork and wipes his dirty fingers on Granginet's trousers.)

Gran.—My dear boy, keep still, won't you—remember, I'm not your jumping-jack.

Ant.—Baa, baa!

Gran.—(Aside.) This is a dinner that starts off in fine shape! Heavens! (Bodinot and his wife return, she holding the baby in her arms.)

Mad. B.—Excuse me, Monsieur Granginet; you will kindly permit me to hold the baby on my knees while dining, will you not? We're not so likely to be disturbed.

Gran.—Certainly, Madame, as you wish, provided that doesn't prevent our dining.

Mad. B.—Oh! I'm quite used to it—Nanette, the carp. (Nanette brings on the carp. Madame Bodinot's whole attention is given to the baby; Bodinot, himself, watches her intently; meanwhile, no one serves.)

Gran.—Ahem! ahem! that looks like a fine carp.

Mad. B.—Serve it, my dear, serve it; you see, I must constantly keep a sharp eye on the baby; I can't serve.

Bod.—Well, if I must. I'm not very good at this sort of thing; but, never mind. Like heads, Granginet?

Gran.—I detest them—fortunately for me—for if I liked

them I should eat carp heads, I know—and I detest them. (Bodinot serves. Antony eats gluttonously, and in about a minute becomes purple in the face and howls.)

Mad. B.—Great heavens! what's the matter with my darling? What ails you, Antony?

Ant.—(Pointing to his throat.) It pricks me here—Oh! how it pricks. Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Bod.—Heavens! he's swallowed a bone. Spit, Antony, spit, my boy; cough hard. (The father and mother get up.)

Gran.—"Twould be better, on the contrary, if he tried to swallow.

Mad. B.—Just heaven! can it be possible that my boy is going to strangle?—see how blue in the face he is already. What shall we do?—what can we give him?

Bod.—(Running toward the door.) Nanette, the oil, the oil. Antony, my dear boy, you must drink some oil.

Ant.—No, I don't want any oil—it pricks me—pricks me so.

Bod.—Granginet, my old friend, there's a drug store at the other end of our street, won't you kindly run down there and ask for something that will dissolve a fish bone, while I watch the poor boy?

Gran.—Dissolve a fish bone!—but that can't be dissolved all at once. It seems to me you'd better try—make him swallow a lot of bread.

Ant.—(Smiling.) It's gone, now—I don't feel it any more.

Bod.—It's gone? How fortunate! Hug me, Antony.

Mad. B.—Oh! that upset me entirely—it destroyed all my appetite—that's all the dinner I want.

Gran.—Calm yourself, Madame; it's all over.

Bod.—Yes, compose yourself, my dear—and this little darling, how quietly she took it; how tranquil through it all—she'll be a heroine, my Cleopatra—give her some of the sauce. Ah! see how prettily she eats it. Isn't she charming? Do oo love oor sauce-y? (The capon is brought on.) Ah! here's the famous dish; but certainly I'll not try to carve it.

Mad. B.—Nor I, let me tell you.

Gran.—In that case, I'll take the task upon myself. (He carves.)

Bod.—'Tis distinctly tender; it almost seems to carve itself.

Gran.—Yes, I believe it is even— In fact, I fear,— Have you had the capon on hand some time?

Bod.—Four days—no longer. Has it grown ripe?

Gran.—Well, it has rather that effect on me.

Bod.—So much the better! so much the better! When capon is well ripened it has a high, gamy flavor.

Gran.—Oh! as to flavor, there'll be plenty. (Aside, while he eats.) Devil take well-ripened capons! Pretty dinner I'm getting to-day!

Bod.—Look out, my dear, something's the matter with Cleopatra.

Mad. B.—(Laying the baby on her lap with its head toward Granginet.) She can't retain anything, the little dear—besides, it's your fault, anyway, you gave her too much sauce. You'll kindly permit, Monsieur Granginet?

Bod.—Oh! he knows what babies are—don't pay any attention to the matter, Granginet.

Gran.—Not if I can help it. (The salad is brought on; it is so strongly impregnated with vinegar that it fills Granginet's eyes with tears.)

Bod.—Fine salad, that!—well seasoned—plenty of seasoning for me. Now, Nanette, what are you going to give us for dessert?

Nan.—Nothing at all, sir.

Bod.—What! nothing?

Mad. B.—Heavens! my dear, what time have I had to think about dessert? Haven't I had the baby constantly in my arms?

Bod.—You're right—Granginet will excuse us. I know he'd rather see a pleasant domestic scene than a few plates of dessert.

Gran.—(Hiding his vexation.) Oh! assuredly—a pleasant domestic scene—besides, I've dined sumptuously.

Bod.—But, to make amends for the dessert, I shall favor you with a taste of a certain liquor—well, you can tell me what you think of it yourself. We'll go into the salon.

Gran.—(Aside.) It seems that here liquor is to take the place of coffee, also. (They enter the salon. Madame Bodinot

walks the floor with the baby, who is crying. Antony straddles a thick cane and prances around.)

Bod.—(Handing Granginet a very small glass.) Just taste that.

Gran.—(After tasting.) Well, I don't know that I can tell exactly— (Aside.) But, I should say, sweetened dishwater.

Bod.—That's my own special brand.

Gran.—Ah! I see, domestic liquor—permit me to congratulate you—it's very mild.

Mad. B.—Monsieur Granginet, now that you have dined, won't you kindly sing that song you began awhile ago?

Gran.—Since you wish it, Madam. (He sits at the piano.) I am not one of those that refuse in order to be coaxed.

Bod.—Antony, do try to be quiet.

Ant.—(Hitting his jumping-jack with the cane.) I don't want to, I don't.

Bod.—Go ahead, my friend; we're listening—Cleopatra is as quiet as a lamb.

Gran.—I'll take advantage of the circumstance. (He sings:)

Poor little shepherds, the sound of our bagpipes
No longer is heard over mountain and pl—

Ouch! ouch! oh! (Antony, swinging his big cane about, had hit M. Granginet's arm a hard blow.)

Bod.—What's the matter? Did he hurt you?

Gran.—(Quite pale.) Heavens! I thought my arm was broken.

Bod.—(Trying to appear angry with his son.) You naughty boy!—you little rascal!—haven't I forbidden you to play with that cane. (Whispers to M. Granginet.) He can strike a good blow, can't he?

Gran.—Well, I should say so—heavens! how painful!

Bod.—(Whispering to Granginet.) He's a cute one, I tell you—and only seven— (But M. Granginet wishes to hear no more; perceiving that Madame Bodinot has disappeared with the baby, he takes his hat and leaves. He finally reaches home without again using the sidewalks, and during the next two weeks cannot be induced to accept a dinner invitation.)

THE HOUSEHOLD PEACE

(LA PAIX DU MENAGE)

OP

GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

(*Translated by W. H. H. Chambers.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M. DE SALLUS.

MADAME DE SALLUS.

M. JACQUES DE RANDOL.

A SERVANT.

The Household Peace.

ARGUMENT.

M. de Sallus had married and then speedily grown tired of his wife, Madeline, some two years before the play opens. During these years he had been spending his leisure moments—practically all his time—with various society women and actresses, but latterly had shown a disposition to pay more attention to his wife, whom he begins to recognize as a most charming woman. Meanwhile Mde. de Sallus had chosen a *cavalier servente* in the person of Jacques de Randol, to whom she confides, in the opening scene, her husband's attempt to renew his former relations. Shortly after, M. de Sallus himself appears, Jacques leaves, and Mde. de Sallus throws in her husband's face, first a glass of water upon his attempting to kiss her, and later a check and some bank bills, following her husband's acquiescence in an ignoble but feigned proposition. She now sends for Jacques and asks him to elope with her, but he, with his larger knowledge of the world, protests, begs her to preserve her reputation, and promises to marry her as soon as she secures a divorce. Madeline insists that she will leave her husband's house, and Jacques finally

agrees to elope. The husband once more reappears, and in a most happy mood begs Jacques to dine with them and asks him to try and bring about a treaty of peace between him, the husband, and Madeline, explaining that an operatic artist has taken him into favor and that he now desires only full liberty, whereupon Jacques wisely concludes not to elope, and stops to dine.

ACT I.

Scene:—The drawing-room of Madame de Sallus in Paris.
Madame de Sallus by the fireplace, reading.

Enter Jacques de Randol, very quietly. He looks around to see if he is being observed, then briskly kisses her on the hair. Startled, she utters a faint cry and turns toward him.

Madame de Sallus.—Oh! but you are imprudent.

Jacques.—Don't be alarmed, no one saw me.

Mad. de S.—But the servants?

Jacq.—Are in the anteroom.

Mad. de S.—What!—and they did not announce you.

Jacq.—No—simply opened the door.

Mad. de S.—What must they think?

Jacq.—Doubtless, that with me it no longer matters.

Mad. de S.—I shall not permit them—I wish them to announce you. It doesn't look well.

Jacq.—(Laughing.) Perchance they'll begin to announce your husband.

Mad. de S.—Jacques, this facetiousness is ill-timed.

Jacq.—Pardon me. (He sits down.) Are you expecting someone?

Mad. de S.—Yes—probably. You know I always receive when I'm at home.

Jacq.—I know that one has the pleasure of seeing you

five minutes, simply time to inquire concerning your health and then some gentleman or other appears, someone deeply in love with you of course, who impatiently awaits the disappearance of the first arrival.

Mad. de S.—(Smiling.) What would you have? Since I am not your wife I fear that it must indeed be so.

Jacq.—Ah! If you were my wife!

Mad. de S.—If I were your wife?

Jacq.—I would take you far away from this horrible city for five or six months to enjoy you quite alone.

Mad. de S.—You would tire of me more quickly.

Jacq.—Oh! no, indeed.

Mad. de S.—Oh! yes, indeed.

Jacq.—Are you aware that it is simply torture to love a woman like you?

Mad. de S.—Why?

Jacq.—Because one loves you as poor hungry devils regard the appetizing viands placed behind a restaurant's plate-glass.

Mad. de S.—Oh! Jacques.

Jacq.—'Tis true; a society woman belongs to the world, that is to say, to everybody except him on whom she bestows her love. He can see her, with every door wide open a quarter of an hour every third day, but not more frequently, thanks to servants. Exceptionally, with a thousand and one precautions, as many fears and subterfuges, she joins him once or twice a month in furnished lodgings. She then has just one little quarter of an hour to concede him because she has left the house of Madame X. and is on her way to Madame Z.'s, where she has told her coachman to call for her. Should it rain she will not come at all, since 'tis impossible to rid herself of this same coachman. Now, this coachman, and the footman, and Madame X. and Madame Z., and all the rest, all those that enter her house as into a museum, a museum that never closes, those men and women who devour her life minute by minute, second by second, to whom she owes her time as the petty official owes his to the State, because she is in society, all these people are the trans-

parent yet infrangible glass which separate you from my tender passion.

Mad. de S.—You are neurotic to-day.

Jacq.—No, but I hunger for solitude with you. You are mine, are you not? or rather, I am yours; well, is there in truth the slightest semblance of it? I pass my life in seeking methods to encounter you. Yes, our love is made up of encounters, of salutations, of glances, of passing contact, and—nothing else. In the morning we meet on the avenue, a salutation; later we meet in your home or at a friend's, a score of words; again at the theatre, ten words; sometimes we dine at the same table, too far apart for speech, and then I dare not even look at you because of other eyes. 'Tis a pretty sort of love! Are we even acquainted?

Mad. de S.—Then, perchance, you would like to elope with me?

Jacq.—"Tis impossible, unfortunately.

Mad. de S.—But why?

Jacq.—I don't know. I say simply that this life is very enervating.

Mad. de S.—"Tis precisely because of the many obstacles that your tenderness does not languish.

Jacq.—Oh! Madeline, can you say that?

Mad. de S.—Believe me, if your affection has any chance to endure, 'tis especially because it is not free.

Jacq.—Indeed! I have never seen another woman quite so positive as yourself. Then, you believe, that if, perchance, I were to become your husband I should cease to love you?

Mad. de S.—Not immediately, but ere long.

Jacq.—"Tis revolting, what you say.

Mad. de S.—No, 'tis true. When a confectioner, you know, takes into his service a sweet-toothed clerk he says to her: Eat as many bonbons as you like, my dear. She fairly stuffs herself for a week, then loathes them for the balance of her life.

Jacq.—Well, really! But pray, why was I especially—distinguished?

Mad. de S.—Oh! I don't know—to be pleasant to you.

Jacq.—Now I beg—do not chaff.

Mad. de S.—I said to myself: Here's a poor fellow who seems to be head over heels in love with me. And I, well, I'm quite free, morally, considering that I have entirely ceased to please my husband for more than two years. Now, since this man loves me, why not love him?

Jacq.—You are cruel.

Mad. de S.—Quite the contrary; I have not been. Pray, of what do you complain?

Jacq.—Really, you exasperate me with this continual chaffing. Ever since I loved you you have tortured me, and I do not know if you have for me even the slightest affection.

Mad. de S.—At all events I have granted—favors.

Jacq.—Oh! you have played a strange part. From the very first day I have been conscious that you were acting the coquette with me, the obscure and mystifying coquette, the part you women alone know how to play when you wish to please without making it obvious. By degrees you conquered me with artful glances, winning smiles and just the slightest pressure of the hand without compromising, engaging or unmasking yourself. You have been amazingly clever and seductive. I have loved you with my whole soul, sincerely and faithfully. And to-day I do not know what feeling you have there—in the depth of that heart—what thought you have there—in the recesses of that brain—I do not know, I know nothing. I look at you and say to myself: this woman who seems to have chosen me, seems also ever to forget that she has so chosen. Does she love me? Has she tired of me? Or, is it but a fitful flight; a lover taken to see, to know and to sample—without hunger? There are days when I ask myself if among the many who love you and ceaselessly tell their love there be not one that begins to please you more?

Mad. de S.—Indeed, there are things into which one must never try to search deeply.

Jacq.—Oh! but you are merciless. That means you do not love me.

Mad. de S..—Of what do you complain? That I do not speak?—for—I do not think you can reproach me with anything else.

Jacq..—Pardon me. I am jealous.

Mad. de S..—Of whom?

Jacq..—I do not know. I am jealous of everything unknown in you.

Mad. de S..—Yes; without being grateful to me for the rest.

Jacq..—Pardon. I love you too much; everyone disquiets me.

Mad. de S..—Everyone?

Jacq..—Yes, everyone.

Mad. de S..—Are you jealous of my husband?

Jacq..—(Astonished.) No—what an idea!

Mad. de S..—Well, you're wrong.

Jacq..—Pshaw! You're ever chaffing.

Mad. de S..—No. I really wish to speak of the matter very seriously and to ask counsel.

Jacq..—Regarding your husband?

Mad. de S..—(Seriously.) Yes; indeed, I'm not joking or rather, 'tis no longer a joking matter. (Laughing.) Then, you are not jealous of my husband? He is, however, the only man who has any rights over me.

Jacq..—'Tis precisely because of these rights that I am not at all jealous. The hearts of women do not recognize rights.

Mad. de S..—My dear, right is a positive thing, a title to possession which one may neglect—as my husband has for two years—but which may also be used at any given moment, as he has seemed to desire for some time.

Jacq..—You say that your husband—

Mad. de S..—Yes.

Jacq..—'Tis impossible—

Mad. de S..—Why impossible?

Jacq..—Because your husband has—other occupations.

Mad. de S..—He likes to change them, it seems.

Jacq.—Come, tell me, Madeline, what has happened.

Mad. de S.—Ah! really.—Then you are becoming jealous of him.

Jacq.—Pray tell me, are you merely chaffing or do you speak seriously?

Mad. de S.—I speak seriously—very seriously.

Jacq.—Well, what happened?

Mad. de S.—You are aware of my situation, but I have never told you my history; a very simple one which can be told in a score or so of words. At nineteen I married Count Jean de Sallus, who fell in love with me at the Opéra-Comique. He was already acquainted with my father's notary. He was very nice for a time; yes, very nice, indeed. Truly, I believe he loved me and I also was very nice to him, very nice. He certainly could not apply to me the shadow of a reproach.

Jacq.—Did you love him?

Mad. de S.—Heavens! Never ask such questions.

Jacq.—Ah! Then you did love him?

Mad. de S.—Yes and no. If I loved him, it was as a little fool. But I never told him, for I never learned to make my feelings manifest.

Jacq.—That's very true.

Mad. de S.—Yes; 'tis quite possible that I foolishly loved him for awhile, loved like a young woman, timid, trembling, awkward, uneasy, ever frightened at this ugly thing, man's love; at this ugly thing which is also so tender and sweet, sometimes. Now, you know him. He is a ladies' man—the ladies' man of the clubs—that worst of all the species. They, at bottom, have no lasting affection, save for the frail sisterhood who are the true mates to clubmen. They are habituated to salacious twaddle and depraved caresses. They need the sensual and the immodest—words and bodies—to attract and retain them—unless—unless every man is really incapable of lasting affection for the same woman. In brief I soon became conscious that he had grown indifferent to me, that he embraced me—with negligence; that he regarded me—without attention; that he did not constrain himself in any way before me—in his manners, in his actions or in his

talk. No sooner was he in the house than he threw himself into the depths of an armchair and buried himself in a newspaper; he shrugged his shoulders and rudely exclaimed: "Deuce take everything," when dissatisfied. At last one day he yawned while stretching his arms. That day I clearly comprehended that he loved me no longer. 'Twas a severe blow, and my suffering was so great that I failed to act the coquette and win him back again. I soon learned that he had a mistress, a society woman. Since, we have lived like two neighbors, after a stormy explanation.

Jacq.—What! an explanation?

Mad. de S.—Yes.

Jacq.—Apropos of—his mistress?

Mad. de S.—Yes and no.—'Tis very difficult to tell.—He felt obliged,—not to arouse my suspicions, doubtless,—to simulate, from time to time—rarely—a certain tenderness, rather frigid, nevertheless, for his legitimate consort—who had a claim upon this tenderness. Well, I gave him to understand that in the future he could abstain from these politic manifestations.

Jacq.—How did you tell him that?

Mad. de S.—I don't recall.

Jacq.—It must have been very amusing.

Mad. de S.—No—he seemed at first very much surprised. Then I recited my little speech, carefully prepared and learned by heart, in which I invited him to take elsewhere his intermittent fantasies. He saw the point, bowed very politely and left—for good.

Jacq.—And never returned?

Mad. de S.—Never.

Jacq.—He has never tried to speak of his affection?

Mad. de S.—No, never.

Jacq.—And you have never regretted it?

Mad. de S.—It matters little. What really matters is, that he has had innumerable mistresses, whom he has kept, whom he has placarded, whom he has paraded. At first it irritated, grieved and humiliated me. Then, I made up my mind and later, two years later, I took a lover—you—Jacques.

Jacq.—(Kissing her hand.) And I love you with all my soul, Madeline.

Mad. de S.—But, 'tis all improper.

Jacq.—What do you mean by all?

Mad. de S.—Our life—my husband—his mistress—I—and you.

Jacq.—This proves more than every thing else that you do not love me.

Mad. de S.—Why?

Jacq.—You dare to say of love that it is improper. If you loved, 'twould be divine. A loving woman would treat as ignoble traitors those who should affirm such a thing. Improper, love!

Mad. de S.—'Tis possible. All depends upon the eyes; I see too well.

Jacq.—What do you see?

Mad. de S.—I see too well, too far and too clearly.

Jacq.—You do not love me.

Mad. de S.—If I did not love you—a little—my favors would have no excuse.

Jacq.—A little—just enough to excuse you.

Mad. de S.—I do not excuse, I accuse myself.

Jacq.—So you did love me—a little then, but love me no longer.

Mad. de S.—Do not reason too much.

Jacq.—'Tis your custom.

Mad. de S.—No; but I judge of things accomplished. One has never just ideas nor accurate opinions except on that which is past.

Jacq.—And you regret?—

Mad. de S.—Perhaps.

Jacq.—Then, to-morrow?—

Mad. de S.—I don't know.

Jacq.—Is it nothing to have gained a friend who is devoted to you, body and soul?

Mad. de S.—To-day.

Jacq.—And to-morrow.

Mad. de S.—Yes, the to-morrow after the night, but not the to-morrow after the year.

Jacq.—You will see—then, your husband?

Mad. de S.—That seems to pester you?

Jacq.—By Jove!

Mad. de S.—My husband has fallen in love with me again.

Jacq.—'Tis impossible.

Mad. de S.—What, once more!—How insolent you are! Why not, my dear?

Jacq.—One can fall in love with a woman before marriage, but he does not fall in love again with his wife.

Mad. de S.—Perhaps he has not loved me until now.

Jacq.—Impossible, he could not have known you without having loved you after his fashion—short and none too sweet.

Mad. de S.—It matters little. He loves or is about to love me.

Jacq.—Truly, I cannot comprehend it. Relate the circumstance.

Mad. de S.—But I have nothing to relate; he makes declarations, embraces, and menaces me with—with—his authority. In short, I am much disturbed and annoyed.

Jacq.—Madeline—you torture me.

Mad. de S.—Well, think you that I do not suffer? I am no longer a faithful wife since I have chosen you; but I am, and shall remain pure in heart.—You or him.—Never you and him. This is to me an infamy; the shameless infamy of guilty women; this partnership which degrades them. One may fall, because—because there are ditches beside the road in all its length and 'tis not always easy to follow the straight and narrow path, but should one fall 'tis no reason to wallow in the mud.

Jacq.—(Taking both her hands and kissing them.) I adore you.

Mad. de S.—(Artlessly.) And I, also, Jacques, I love you very much; and this is why I tremble.

Jacq.—At last!—many thanks; come, tell me, how long is it since he was stricken with—this relapse?

Mad. de S.—Oh! since a couple or three weeks.

Jacq.—No longer than this?

Mad. de S.—No longer.

Jacq.—Well, your husband is simply—a widower.

Mad. de S.—What do you mean?

Jacq.—I mean that your husband is unattached, and endeavors to occupy with his wife some passing leisure.

Mad. de S.—And I tell you, that he is really in love with me.

Jacq.—Yes—yes—yes and no.—He is in love with you—and also with another.—Let me see—he's terribly out of humor, is he not?

Mad. de S.—Oh! abominably.

Jacq.—Then here is a man in love with you, yet who manifests this return of tenderness by intolerable behavior—for he is intolerable, is he not?

Mad. de S.—Yes, indeed; most intolerable.

Jacq.—If he pressed you gently, you would not tremble. You would say to yourself: I've plenty of time, and he would inspire in you a little pity, for you must always, at least, pity the man who loves you, even if he is your husband.

Mad. de S.—'Tis true.

Jacq.—He is nervous, preoccupied, melancholy, is he not?

Mad. de S.—Yes, yes—

Jacq.—And brusque with you—not to say brutal? He demands a right instead of begging a favor?

Mad. de S.—'Tis true.

Jacq.—My dear, at this moment, you are a substitute.

Mad. de S.—Oh! no; oh! no—

Jacq.—My darling, the last mistress of your husband was Madame de Bardane, whom he left in rather blunt fashion about two months ago, to pay court to Santelli.

Mad. de S.—The singer?

Jacq.—Yes; a capricious being, very clever, very adroit

and very mercenary; not a rare species on the boards, or for that matter in society either.

Mad. de S..—Then 'tis to see her he goes to the opera so constantly.

Jacq.—(Laughing.) Doubt it not.

Mad. de S.—(Thoughtfully.) No—no, you are mistaken.

Jacq.—Santelli resists and fairly maddens him with love. Then, having a heart full of passion, with no other outlet, he offers you a share.

Mad. de S.—My dear, you dream—were he in love with Santelli, he would not tell me that he loved me.—Were he intensely preoccupied with this barn-stormer, he would not be paying court to me.—If, in short, he ardently yearned for her, he would not desire me at the same time.

Jacq.—Ah! how little you know certain men. Men of your husband's species, when a woman has injected into their heart this poison, love, which for them is but brutal desire, when this woman escapes or resists them, they resemble dogs gone mad. They plunge forward like madmen or those possessed, with arms outstretched and parted lips. They must love, it matters not whom, as the dog opens his jaws and bites, it matters not what, it matters not whom. Santelli has unchained the beast and you who find yourself within reach of his teeth, look out. That thing, love? No, if you please, 'tis madness!

Mad. de S.—You do him injustice. Jealousy makes you malicious.

Jacq.—You may be sure I am not mistaken.

Mad. de S.—Yes, you are mistaken. My husband, who formerly neglected and abandoned me, doubtless found me a ninny. Now, finding me improved, he returns. Nothing simpler; so much the worse for him, moreover, since it depended on him alone whether I should be a virtuous woman all my life.

Jacq.—Madeline!

Mad. de S.—Well, what is it?

Jacq.—Does a woman cease to be virtuous when, rejected by the man who has taken charge of her existence, of her

happiness, of her tenderness, and of her dreams, she, young, beautiful and full of hope, does not resign herself to an eternal isolation, to an eternal abandonment?

Mad. de S.—I have already told you that there are things upon which we must not think too deeply. This is of the number. (They hear a bell sound twice.) 'Tis my husband. Endeavor to please him; he's easily offended just now.

Jacq.—(Rising.) I prefer to leave. I love that husband of yours but little for many reasons; then, too, it is painful to be gracious, since I rather despise him, and he would have the right to scorn me should I clasp his hand.

Mad. de S.—I told you that 'twas all improper.

Enter M. de Sallus in a morose mood; he looks for a moment at his wife and Jacques de Randol, who is taking leave of her, then advances.

Jacques.—Good-day, Sallus.

M. de Sallus.—Good-day, Randol. Am I driving you away?

Jacq.—No, 'tis the hour. I have an appointment at the club at midnight and it is now eleven fifty. (They shake hands.) Will you be one of the first-nighters at *Mohammed*?

M. de S.—Yes, most assuredly.

Jacq.—They say 'twill be a great success.

M. de S.—Yes, most assuredly.

Jacq.—(Again shaking his hand.) 'Till we meet again.

M. de S.—Au revoir.

Jacq.—Good-bye, Madame.

M. de S.—Good-bye, Monsieur. (Jacques leaves.)

M. de S.—(Throwing himself into an armchair.) He's been here a long time, M. Jacques de Randol?

M. de S.—Not at all—about half an hour.

M. de S.—A half-hour plus an hour, makes an hour and a half. Time seems short to you when you're with him.

M. de S.—What! an hour and a half?

M. de S.—Yes. Seeing a carriage before the door I asked the footman: Who is here? he replied: Monsieur de Randol.—

Has he been here long?—He came at ten, Monsieur. Now, admitting that the footman was mistaken a quarter of an hour in your favor, that makes an hour and forty minutes at the very least.

Mad. de S..—Indeed! What's the matter with you? I have no longer the right to receive whom I please, now?

M. de S..—Oh! my dear, I constrain you in nothing, nothing. I am astonished merely, that you should not be able to tell the difference between half an hour and an hour and a half.

Mad. de S..—Is it a scene you wish? If you are trying to pick a quarrel, just say so. I shall know how to reply. But, if you are simply ill-humored, go to bed and sleep it off, if you can.

M. de S..—I'm not trying to pick a quarrel, nor am I ill-humored. I merely state that time to you seems very short when you pass it with M. Jacques de Randol.

Mad. de S..—Yes, very short; much shorter than when I pass it with you.

M. de S..—He's a charming fellow and I can easily understand that he pleases you. Moreover, it appears that he finds you pleasing also, since he comes here almost every day.

Mad. de S..—This particular style of hostility is quite thrown away on me, my dear; I beg you to express and explain yourself clearly. Then you would play the jealous husband's part and make a scene?

M. de S..—God forbid! I have too much confidence in you and too much respect for you to reproach you in any way whatsoever. And I am sure that you have sufficient tact not to furnish occasion for calumny or scandal.

Mad. de S..—Do not juggle with words. You think, then, that M. de Randol too frequently visits this house—your house?

M. de S..—I cannot think ill of anything you do.

Mad. de S..—In truth, you have no right. And now, since you speak after this fashion, let us settle this question once for all, as I abominate misunderstandings. You have, it seems, a short memory; but I shall come to your aid. Let us be

frank. You think no longer to-day, in consequence of I know not what circumstances, as you thought two years ago. Pray, recall clearly the past. As you plainly neglected me, I became uneasy, and then I learned, I saw, that you loved Madame de Servières—I confided to you my chagrin—my anxieties—I was jealous! What did you reply? That which every man replies when he no longer loves the woman that reproaches him. At first, you shrugged your shoulders, you smiled impatiently and murmured that I was foolish; then, you expounded, with infinite address, I grant, the great broad principles of free love adopted by each and every husband that deceives and yet who takes for granted, you may be sure, that he himself will not be deceived. You gave me to understand that marriage is not a chain, but an association of interests; a social rather than a moral bond; that it no longer requires of husband or wife love or even friendship, provided there is no scandal. Oh! you did not openly avow your mistress, but you pleaded mitigating circumstances. You were very ironical toward those wives—poor fools—that did not permit their husbands to be gallant; gallantry being one of the laws of that elegant society to which you belong. You laughed heartily at the figure that poor fellow cut who did not dare to pay a compliment to a woman in the presence of his wife; and as heartily did you laugh at the supersensitive wife whose eye follows her husband into every corner and who imagines, as soon as her husband has disappeared within the adjoining room, that he has fallen on his knees before a rival. All of which was clever, droll and despicable; enwrapped in compliments and spiced with cruelty; bitter-sweet to drive from one's heart all love for the delicate, false, yet well-bred man who could utter such sentiments. I understood—I cried—I suffered. Then I locked my door against you. You made no further claims; you judged me more intelligent than you would have thought, and we have lived completely separated. 'Tis now two years that this has lasted, two long years, which certainly to you has seemed no longer than six months. We go out together; we return home together; then, we each enter our own apartments. This situation has been established by you in consequence of your first infidelity, which has been followed by

many others. I said nothing, but resigned myself and drove you from my heart. Now, that all is finished, what do you ask?

M. de S.—My dear, I ask nothing. I do not wish to reply to the aggressive sermon you have just read me. I wish simply to offer counsel—as a friend—upon the danger to which your reputation may be exposed. You are beautiful, you attract much attention and are greatly envied. The world quickly suspects an intrigue—

Mad. de S.—Excuse me, but if we are to speak of intrigues, I demand that the balance be struck between us.

M. de S.—Confound it! don't joke about this matter, I beg. I speak as a friend, a serious friend. Regarding what you have just said, 'tis greatly exaggerated.

M. de S.—Not at all. You have placarded, openly paraded all your liaisons, which is equivalent to authorizing me to imitate you. Very well, my dear, I am seeking—

M. de S.—Permit me—

Mad. de S.—Allow me to speak. I am beautiful, you say, and I am young, yet condemned by you to live and to grow old—widowed. My dear, look at me. (She rises.) Is it right that I should resign myself to play the part of the forsaken Ariadne while my husband runs from woman to woman, from mistress to mistress? (Animated.) A virtuous wife! I understand you. Must a virtuous woman go to the length of sacrificing all her life, all her joy, all her tenderness, all of that for which we women are born? Just look at me. Am I intended for the cloister? As I married a man, 'tis clear I was not destined for the cloister, is it not? This man who took me has rejected me and runs after others—I am not of those who share. So much the worse for you. I am free. You have no right to give me counsel. I am free.

M. de S.—My dear, calm yourself. You are completely mistaken. I have never suspected you. I have a profound esteem and a real friendship for you; a friendship which grows each day. I do not wish to return to this past with which you reproach me so cruelly. I am perhaps a little too —how shall I express it?

Mad. de S..—Say atavistic; too much of an eighteenth-century Frenchman. I know this plea to excuse every weakness and prank. Ah! that elegant eighteenth century! What grace! what delicate fantasies! what charming caprices! But 'tis worn threadbare, my dear.

M. de S..—No, you are mistaken again. I am, or more accurately I was, too Parisian; too much habituated to night-life, when I married; too much accustomed to the green-room, to the club, to a thousand and one things, habits that cannot be broken at once; it needs time. And then, marriage changes us too much, too quickly. We must grow used to it—little by little—but you cut me short just as I was about to attain this end.

Mad. de S..—Many thanks. And now you come, perhaps, to propose another trial?

M. de S..—Oh! whenever you like. Truly, when one marries after having lived as I had, one cannot prevent himself at first from regarding his wife as a new mistress—a virtuous mistress—'tis only later that he clearly comprehends, clearly differentiates—and repents.

Mad. de S..—Well, my dear, 'tis too late. As I have told you, I am seeking on my own account. I have taken three years to decide. You will admit that it is a long time. I require someone very nice, someone better than yourself. 'Tis a compliment I pay you, a compliment you do not seem to fully appreciate.

M. de S..—Madeline, such pleasantry is out of place.

Mad. de S..—Not at all, for I infer that all your mistresses were better than I, since you preferred them to me.

M. de S..—Come, tell me, in what frame of mind are you?

Mad. de S..—Oh! I'm ever the same. 'Tis you who have changed, my dear.

M. de S..—It is true I have changed.

Mad. de S..—That is to say?—

M. de S..—That I was an imbecile.

Mad. de S..—And that?—

M. de S..—That I am returning to my senses.

Mad. de S..—And that?—

M. de S.—That I am in love with my wife.

Mad. de S.—So, you are fasting?

M. de S.—What's that?

Mad. de S.—I said you are fasting.

M. de S.—What do you mean?

Mad. de S.—When one is fasting, he is hungry, and when one is hungry he decides to eat things which at another time he would not care for in the least. I am the dish, neglected in the day of abundance to which you return in the time of famine. No, thanks.

M. de S.—I have never seen you in such a mood. You astonish and pain me.

Mad. de S.—So much the worse for both of us. If I astonish you, you disgust me. Know, then, that I am not adapted to this rôle of substitute.

M. de S.—(Approaches and takes her hand, which he kisses fervently.) Madeline, I swear I am truly and deeply in love with you—in love forever.

Mad. de S.—It may be that you are so convinced yourself; but who is this woman who at the present time does not consent to your advances?

M. de S.—Madeline, I swear——

Mad. de S.—Don't swear. I feel morally certain that you have broken with some mistress. You need another and not finding her, address yourself to me. For three years I have been forgotten, therefore I strike you as something new. It is not your wife to whom you are returning, but to a woman with whom you have broken and now desire to resume your former relations. In effect 'tis but the act of a libertine.

M. de S.—I do not ask myself if you are my wife or another's; you are the one I love, the one who has taken possession of my heart. It is of you I dream, your image follows me everywhere, it is for you I long. It so happens that you are my wife, but whether it is better so or worse I don't know, nor do I care.

Mad. de S.—'Tis truly a pretty part you offer me. After Mlle. Zozo, Mlle. Lulu, Mlle. Tata, etc., you seriously offer

Madame de Sallus the vacant role and ask her, do you, to become the mistress of her husband for a time?

M. de S.—No, forever.

Mad. de S.—Pardon me, but if forever, I should again become your wife, and this is not the matter with which we are concerned, since I have ceased to be your wife. The distinction is subtle but real. Besides, the idea of making me your legitimate mistress would delight you more than the thought of again taking to your bosom your lawful companion.

M. de S.—(Laughing.) Indeed! and why should not a wife become the mistress of her husband? I fully concede your point of view. You are free, absolutely free, through my fault. And I am desperately in love with you and plead: Madeline, since your heart is free take pity on me. I love you.

Mad. de S.—And in the name of husband, you ask the preference?

M. de S.—Yes.

Mad. de S.—You recognize that I am free?

M. de S.—Entirely.

Mad. de S.—And you desire me to become your mistress?

M. de S.—Yes.

Mad. de S.—'Tis thoroughly understood? Your mistress?

M. de S.—Yes.

Mad. de S.—Very well—I was about to accept an engagement elsewhere, but since you ask the preference, I shall grant it—on equal terms.

M. de S.—I fail to understand you.

Mad. de S.—I'll explain myself. Do you find me as charming as your ladies of easy virtue? Pray, be frank.

M. de S.—Much more charming.

Mad. de S.—In sober earnest?

M. de S.—Most truly.

Mad. de S.—Better than the best?

M. de S.—A thousand times.

Mad. de S.—Very well! tell me, how much did she cost you, the best one, in three months?

M. de S.—I don't quite follow you.

Mad. de S.—I said: How much did the most charming of your mistresses in three months cost you?—in money, jewels, dinners, suppers, theatres, etc., etc.; in brief, complete maintenance?

M. de S.—Do you suppose I know?

Mad. de S.—You ought to know. Come, let us figure up the account. Will you give me a round sum, or pay the tradesmen separately? Oh! you're not the man to enter into these petty details. You'll give the sum in a lump.

M. de S.—Madeline, you're simply intolerable.

Mad. de S.—Follow me carefully. When you began to neglect me, you rid your stables of three horses, one of mine and two of yours; you dismissed a coachman and a footman as well. We must needs economize within to pay the new expenses without.

M. de S.—But this is not true.

Mad. de S.—Oh! yes it is. I have dates, do not attempt to deny it or I will confound you. You likewise ceased to give me jewels, since you had other ears, other fingers, other wrists and other bosoms to embellish. You dropped out one of our two days at the opera and many less important things that for the moment I have forgotten. Now this, as I calculate it, must make about five thousand francs a month. Am I right?

M. de S.—You're crazy.

Mad. de S.—No, no. Confess. Did the most expensive one cost you as much as five thousand francs a month?

M. de S.—You're crazy.

Mad. de S.—If that's the way you look at it, good night. (She starts to leave. He retains her.)

M. de S.—Forego, I beg you, such pleasantry.

Mad. de S.—Five thousand francs! Tell me if she cost you five thousand francs.

M. de S.—Yes, somewhere near that sum.

Mad. de S.—Very well, my dear, give me five thousand francs, cash down, and I'll sign you a lease for a month.

M. de S.—But you're out of your mind.

Mad. de S.—Well, then, good night.

M. de S.—What lunacy! Come, Madeline, do not go away, but let us talk seriously.

Mad. de S.—Of what?

M. de S.—Of—of my love for you.

Mad. de S.—But that isn't at all serious, your love.

M. de S.—Yes, I swear it is.

Mad. de S.—Oh! nonsense! Really, you have made me thirsty by compelling me to speak so much. (She turns to the tray containing the tea-urn, syrups, etc., and pours out a glass of water. As she is about to drink, her husband steals up quietly and kisses her on the neck. She turns round brusquely and throws the glass of water full in his face.)

M. de S.—Oh! that's stupid.

Mad. de S.—Perhaps it is; but what you did or attempted to do was ridiculous.

M. de S.—Come, Madeline.

Mad. de S.—Five thousand francs.

M. de S.—But that would be idiotic.

Mad. de S.—Why so?

M. de S.—You ask why? A husband to pay his wife, his lawful wife. Why, I have the right—

Mad. de S.—No, you have the power—and I, well, I should have—my revenge.

M. de S.—Madeline—

Mad. de S.—Five thousand francs.

M. de S.—I would be deplorably ridiculous if I should pay money to my wife; ridiculous and an imbecile.

Mad. de S.—It is much more stupid when one has a wife, such a wife as I am, to pay out your money to hussies.

M. de S.—I admit it; however, if I did marry you, it was not with the intention of ruining myself for you.

Mad. de S.—A word, if you please. When you take away a sum of money, your money, which for this reason is also my money, to some hussy's house, you commit an action more than

doubtful: you ruin me at the same time that you ruin yourself. I have had the delicacy not to ask of you more than the hussy of whom we spoke. Now, the five thousand francs that you pay me will remain in your house, in your home. 'Tis a great saving for you. And then, for I know you, you would never love forever nor complete anything entirely lawful and legitimate; now, if you pay dearly, very dearly—for I shall probably ask an increase for what you have a right to take—you will find our—liaison much more to your taste. So good-night, monsieur; I'm going to retire.

M. de S.—(Insolently.) Do you wish a check or bank bills?

Mad. de S.—(Haughtily.) I prefer bank bills.

M. de S.—(Opening his pocketbook.) I have but three. I'll write a check to complete the amount. (He signs a check, then offers it with the bills to his wife, who takes them with a disdainful look.)

Mad. de S.—(Scathingly.) You are quite the man I thought you. After paying your hussies, you immediately and without a shudder consent to pay me as you paid them. You think me dear, you fear to be grotesque, but you do not perceive that I am selling myself, I, your wife. You longed a little for me—for a change from your hussies—and then, when I propose to degrade myself to their level, you do not repulse, but long for me the more, long as you longed for them, yes, even more, as I am more despicable. You have deceived yourself, my dear. This is not the way that you might have reconquered me. Good-bye. (She throws the money in his face and leaves.)

ACT II.

Scene:—Same as Act I. Madame de 'Sallus is alone and writing; she glances at the clock.

Enter a servant.

Servant.—(Announcing.) Monsieur Jacques de Randol.
Enter Jacques de Randol.

Jacques.—(After kissing her hand.) You're quite well, Madame?

Madame de Sallus.—Fairly well, thank you. (The servant leaves.)

Jacq.—What's the trouble? Your letter completely unnerved me. I thought an accident had happened and I flew.

Mad. de S.—Trouble enough, my dear. We must make an important decision; 'tis a very grave moment for us.

Jacq.—Explain yourself.

Mad. de S.—For two days I have endured all the anguish that the heart of woman can bear.

Jacq.—What has happened?

Mad. de S.—I shall tell you; shall force myself to tell you calmly that you may not think me crazy. I canot live this way—and I sent for you—

Jacq.—You know that I am entirely devoted to you. Tell me what I ought to do—

Mad. de S.—I can no longer live near him. It is impossible. He tortures me.

Jacq.—Your husband?

Mad. de S.—Yes, my husband.

Jacq.—What has he done?

Mad. de S.—We must go back to the time you left the other day. As soon as we were alone, he made a scene—a jealous scene on your account.

Jacq.—On my account?

Mad. de S.—Yes, a scene which proved that he even was playing the spy to some extent.

Jacq.—How so?

Mad. de S.—He had questioned a servant.

Jacq.—Nothing more?

Mad. de S.—No. Besides, that is of slight importance, for he really thinks a great deal of you. Then, he declared his love for me. And I, well, I was perhaps too insolent—too disdainful—I do not know exactly. I found myself in a situation so grave, so painful, so difficult, that I dared all to avoid it.

Jacq.—What did you do?

Mad. de S.—I tried to wound him in such a way that he would leave me alone forever.

Jacq.—You did not succeed, did you?

Mad. de S.—No.

Jacq.—Such methods never succeed, on the contrary they entice.

Mad. de S.—The next day, during all the breakfast hour, he appeared ill-natured, excited and malicious. Then, when rising from the table, he said: I shall not forget your actions of yesterday, nor shall I permit you to forget them, either. You wish war and it shall be war. But I forewarn you that I shall conquer and tame you, for I am master. I replied: So be it. But if you press me too hard, look out—it doesn't do to fool with women—

Jacq.—It doesn't do, above all, to fool in such a way with one's own wife—What did he reply?

Mad. de S.—He did not reply. He used me brutally.

Jacq.—What? he struck you?

Mad. de S.—Yes and no. He used me brutally—crushed and bruised me. My arms are black and blue at this moment. But he did not strike me.

Jacq.—Well, what did he do?

Mad. de S.—He embraced me while trying to overcome my resistance.

Jacq.—Is that all?

Mad. de S.—What! is that all?—Don't you think that's enough, you?

Jacq.—You don't understand me. I wish to learn if he trounced you.

Mad. de S.—Oh! no. That isn't what I fear of him.—Happily, I was able to reach the bell.

Jacq.—And you rang?

Mad. de S.—Yes.

Jacq.—Well, by Jove!—And when the servant came, did you ask him to show your husband out?

Mad. de S.—You think that amusing?

Jacq.—No, my dear, it grieves me; but I cannot prevent myself from regarding the situation as original. Pardon me—and then?

Mad. dc S.—I ordered my carriage. Immediately after the departure of Joseph, he said to me, with that arrogant air you know so well: To-day or to-morrow, it matters little to me.

Jacq.—And?—

Mad. de S.—That's about all.

Jacq.—About?—

Mad. de S.—Yes, for at present I barricade myself in my apartments, as soon as I hear him enter the house.

Jacq.—Have you not seen him since?

Mad. de S.—Yes, several times, but each time merely for a few moments.

Jacq.—What did he say to you?

Mad. de S.—Almost nothing. He sneered or insolently asked: "Are you less ferocious to-day?"—Finally, last evening, he brought a little book to the table, which he read while we dined. As I did not wish to appear ill-at-ease or anxious, I said: "You are certainly adopting in my presence habits of exquisite courtesy."—He smiled. "What habits?"—"You choose for reading those moments that we pass together."—He answered: "'Tis your fault, by Jove! since you permit me nothing else. Besides, this little book is extremely interesting—'tis called the Code. Will you kindly permit me to make known to you some articles which must certainly please you?"—Then he read the law, all those sections pertaining to marriage, the duties of the wife and the rights of the husband. Looking me full in the face, he asked: "Did you understand clearly?"—In the same tone of voice I replied: "Yes, only too clearly. At last, I clearly understand what manner of man I have married."—With that I came away and have not seen him since.

Jacq.—Then you haven't seen him to-day?

Mad. de S.—No, he breakfasted elsewhere. Now, I have thought and thought and have determined to come no longer face to face with him.

Jacq.—Are you quite sure that his action is not due more to anger, vanity wounded by your attitude, to bravado and vexation? Perhaps he may be very kind to you shortly. He spent last evening at the opera. Santelli scored a great success in Mohammed and, I believe, invited him to supper. Now, if the supper proved to his taste, perhaps at this very moment he is in a charming humor.

Mad. de S.—Oh! but you are irritating!—Can't you understand that I am in this man's power, that I belong to him more than his valet, more even than his dog, for, over me he possesses ignoble rights. The Code, your code of savages delivers me without defense, without possible revolt, to him: he can do everything except kill me. Do you fully comprehend that? Fully comprehend the horror of such a law?—He can do everything except kill me—and he has the power, the power and the police to exact everything—and I, I have not one method of escaping this man I despise, this man I hate. Yes, this is your law. He took, married and then abandoned me. And I have the moral right, the absolute right to hate him; and yet in spite of this legitimate hatred, in spite of the disgust, the horror which at this moment I must feel for this husband, who has disdained, who has deceived me, who has run under my very eyes from woman to woman, he can at his good pleasure exact of me a shameless, an infamous surrender—I have no right to conceal myself, for I have no right to the key that locks my door. All is his; the key, the door and the woman.—Oh! 'tis monstrous, that! To be no longer master of one's self, to have no longer the sacred liberty of preserving one's own body spotless; is not this the most abominable law that you have established, you men?

Jacq.—Oh! I clearly comprehend that you must suffer, but I can see no remedy. No magistrate can protect you, no text defend you.

Mad. de S.—I know it well. But when one has no longer either mother or father, when the police are against you and when one will not accept those degrading transactions, which most women accept, there is always a method.

Jacq.—And that is?

Mad. de S.—To leave the house.

Jacq.—You wish to?—

Mad. de S.—Run away.

Jacq.—Alone?

Mad. de S.—No—with you.

Jacq.—With me. You think of doing that?

Mad. de S.—Yes, so much the better. Scandal will prevent him from taking me back. I am brave. He forces me to dishonor, it shall be complete, startling. So much the worse for him, so much the worse for me.

Jacq.—Now, take care, you are in one of those moments of exaltation in which we are likely to commit irreparable follies.

Mad. de S.—I would rather commit a folly and ruin myself—since they call it ruin—than to remain exposed to this infamous daily struggle with which I am menaced.

Jacq.—Madeline, listen to me. You are in a terrible situation, do not hurl yourself headlong into one absolutely hopeless.

Mad. de S.—And what do you counsel?

Jacq.—I don't know—we must see. But I cannot counsel you to take a step that would inevitably lead to scandal and place you outside the law of society.

Mad. de S.—Ah! yes, this other law which permits one to have lovers with discretion; without offense to the conventionalities.

Jacq.—This is not the point in question; but to so act that, in the quarrel with your husband, you may not appear to be in the wrong. Have you decided to leave him?

Mad. de S.—Yes.

Jacq.—Fully decided?

Mad. de S.—Yes.

Jacq.—For good?

Mad. de S.—For good.

Jacq.—Very well, then be cunning, adroit. Preserve your reputation and your name. Make neither talk nor scandal; await an opportunity—

Mad. de S.—And be charming when he returns, submit to his fantasies—

Jacq.—Oh! Madeline, I speak as a friend—

Mad. de S.—As a prudent friend—

Jacq.—As a friend who loves you too much to counsel you to blunder.

Mad. de S.—And just enough to counsel laxity.

Jacq.—I, never. My most ardent desire is to live with you. Obtain your divorce, and then, if you are willing, I'll marry you.

Mad. de S.—Yes, in two years. Your love is patient.

Jacq.—But, if I carry you off, to-morrow he will retake you, at my house, will have you cast into prison, you, remember, and make it impossible for you to become my wife.

Mad. de S.—Cannot we fly elsewhere than to your house? And can we not so conceal ourselves that we cannot be found?

Jacq.—Yes, we may so conceal ourselves; but then we must live in hiding until death, under a false name, in a foreign land or buried in some obscure village. 'Tis the dungeon of love. In three months you would hate me. I cannot allow you to commit this folly.

Mad. de S.—I thought you loved me sufficiently to do this thing I ask. I was mistaken, good-bye.

Jacq.—Madeline, listen—

Mad. de S.—Jacques, you must take me or lose me. Answer.

Jacq.—Madeline, I beg you.

Mad. de S.—That is quite sufficient, good-bye. (She rises and starts toward the door.)

Jacq.—I beg you, listen.

Mad. de S.—No—no—no—Good-bye. (He holds her by the arms; she, exasperated, endeavors to escape.)

Mad. de S.—Let me go, let me go. Will you let me leave—or, I shall call.

Jacq.—Call, but listen to me; I do not want to be some day reproached by you for the insane act you now meditate.

I do not want you to hate me, bound as you will be by this fault to me, nor do I want you to be burdened by the sharp regret that I permitted it.

Mad. de S..—Leave me alone—I pity you—unhand me.

Jacq..—You want to go? Very well, we'll go.

Mad. de S..—Oh! no. No longer. Now I know you. It is too late. Unhand me, I tell you.

Jacq..—I have done what I ought to do. I have said what I ought to say. I am no longer responsible to you and you have no longer the right to reproach me. Let us go.

Mad. de S..—No, it is too late. I do not accept sacrifices.

Jacq..—"Tis not a question of sacrifice. To fly with you is my most ardent desire.

Mad. de S..—(Greatly astonished.) You're crazy.

Jacq..—Why crazy? Is it not natural, since I love you?

Mad. de S..—Explain yourself.

Jacq..—What do you want me to explain? I love you, I have nothing else to say. Let us fly.

Mad. de S..—Just now you were too circumspect to become all at once so hardy.

Jacq..—You do not understand me. Listen; when I became conscious that I loved you, I took upon myself, in respect to you, as well as in respect to me, a sacred engagement. The man who becomes the lover of a woman like yourself, married, yet forsaken; a slave in fact, yet morally free; creates between her and him a bond which she alone can unloosen. This woman risks everything. And 'tis precisely because she knows it, because she gives everything, soul and body, honor and life, because she has foreseen every misery, every danger, every catastrophe, because she intrepidly risks her fate—because she is quite prepared, quite decided to brave everything—her husband, who can kill her, and society which can cast her out, 'tis for all this that she is so glorious in her conjugal infidelity; 'tis for all this that her lover, when taking her, ought also to have foreseen everything and to prefer her to everything else, happen what may. I have nothing more to say. I have spoken at first as the prudent man who

must forewarn you, there now remains in me only the man, he who loves you. Command him.

Mad. de S..—'Tis well said. But is it true?

Jacq..—True indeed.

Mad. de S..—You desire to leave with me?

Jacq..—Yes.

Mad. de S..—From the bottom of your heart?

Jacq..—From the very bottom of my heart.

Mad. de S..—To-day?

Jacq..—Whenever you wish.

Mad. de S..—It is quarter to eight, my husband will soon return. We dine at eight. I will be free at half-past nine or ten o'clock.

Jacq..—Where shall I await you?

Mad. de S..—At the corner in a coupé. (A door-bell is heard.) Here he is. 'Tis the last time—happily.

Enter M. de Sallus.

M. de Sallus..—(To Jacques de Randol, who has arisen to leave.) Ah! What, you're leaving again? I need then but show myself to make you fly?

Jacques..—No, my dear Sallus, you do not make me fly, but I am leaving.

M. de S..—That's exactly what I said. You are always leaving precisely at the moment I arrive. I understand, of course, that the husband is less seductive than the wife, but permit him to believe at least that you do not dislike him greatly. (He laughs.)

Jacq..—On the contrary, I like you much, and if you had the good habit of entering your home without ringing, you would never find me about leaving, at your arrival.

M. de S..—Nevertheless—it's quite natural to ring.

Jacq..—Yes, but I always rise at the sound of the bell; and, upon entering your own home, you might easily dispense with thus announcing yourself as others.

M. de S..—I do not follow you exactly.

Jacq.—'Tis very simple; when I visit people whom I like, as Madame de Sallus or you, I do not care to meet those fashionable Parisians that spend their afternoons in sowing the flowers of speech from drawing-room to drawing-room. I know the flowers and the seeds. The mere entrance of one of these ladies or gentlemen suffices to spoil for me quite all the pleasure I have found in the society of the lady I came to see. Now, when it happens that I am fairly caught on my chair, I'm undone; I no longer know how to get away, but must permit myself to be drawn into the cogs of the running conversation; and, as I know all the questions and all the answers better than I know those of the catechism, I cannot stop, but must run on and on to the very end; 'till the last word has been said on the play or book, the divorce or marriage, or perchance the death of the day. You can readily understand, then, why I rise so brusquely at each and every menace of the bell.

M. de S.—(Laughing.) 'Tis quite true, what you say. Our houses are uninhabitable from four to seven. Our wives have no right to complain if we leave them for the club.

Madame de Sallus.—I cannot, however, receive these maidens of the ballet, these lady-artists of the song and dance, these petticoated painters, poets and musicians, in order to keep you by my side.

M. de S.—I do not ask so much. A few bright fellows, some pretty women and no crowd.

Mad. de S.—'Tis impossible; one cannot close her door to them.

Jacq.—No, one cannot, in truth, dam this flood of fools which flows through drawing-rooms.

M. de S.—Why not?

Mad. de S.—Because that's the way to-day.

M. de S.—'Tis a pity. I should like very much to have at home a chosen and strictly limited circle of friends.

Mad. de S.—You?

M. de S.—Why, yes, I.

Mad. de S.—(Laughing.) Ha! ha! ha! 'Twould be a pretty circle that you would gather around me, such charming

women and fine fellows! 'Tis I that would be leaving the house, then.

M. de S.—My dear, I ask simply for three or four women like yourself.

Mad. de S.—What did you say?

M. de S.—Three or four women like you.

Mad. de S.—If you need four I can understand that you found the house deserted.

M. de S.—You know very well what I mean, there is no need to explain myself more fully. It suffices me to find only you at home, to be better pleased here than I can be anywhere else.

Mad. de S.—I don't recognize you any longer. You must be sick, very sick. Perhaps you're going to die.

M. de S.—Rail at me as much as you like; I shall not get angry.

Mad. de S.—But will it last?

M. de S.—Forever.

Mad. de S.—Man changes often.

M. de S.—My dear Randol, won't you do me the kindness to dine with us? You, perchance, may divert the epigrams that my wife seems to have sharpened and polished for me.

Jacq.—Many thanks, you're very kind, indeed; but I've an engagement.

M. de S.—Break it, I beg.

Jacq.—I cannot, truly.

M. de S.—You dine out.

Jacq.—Yes—or rather no—I've an appointment at nine.

M. de S.—Very important?

Jacq.—Quite so.

M. de S.—With a lady?

Jacq.—My dear fellow—

M. de S.—That's right, be discreet—but that need not prevent your dining with us.

Jacq.—Thanks, I cannot.

M. de S.—You shall leave when you like.

Jacq.—And my dress-suit?

M. de S.—I'll send for it.

Jacq.—No—really; many thanks.

M. de S.—(To his wife.) My dear, make Randol stay.

Mad. de S.—I must confess, my dear, that I care but little to do so.

M. de S.—Well, you're certainly very charming to everybody this evening. Why not?

Mad. de S.—Really, I do not care to compel my friends to remain here simply to give you pleasure and keep you at home. Bring your own.

M. de S.—I shall remain at any rate, and then you will have me tête-à-tête.

Mad. de S.—Nonsense.

M. de S.—I mean it.

Mad. de S.—All the evening?

M. de S.—All the evening.

Mad. de S.—(Ironically.) Gracious! you make me tremble! And to what is this honor due?

M. de S.—Simply that I may have the pleasure of being near you.

Mad. de S.—Indeed! you are in most excellent humor.

M. de S.—Then, persuade Randol to remain.

Mad. de S.—*M. de Randol* shall do as he likes. He knows very well that to me it is always agreeable to have him. (She rises and reflects for a moment.) Dine with us, Monsieur de Randol, you can leave immediately afterward.

Jacq.—With pleasure, Madame.

Mad. de S.—Pardon me for leaving you a second or two. It is eight o'clock. Dinner will be served in a few moments. (She leaves.)

M. de S.—My dear fellow, you will do me a great kindness by passing the evening here.

Jacq.—I cannot, I assure you.

M. de S.—You cannot, really; is it quite impossible?

Jacq.—Quite.

M. de S.—I'm extremely sorry.

Jacq.—Why so?

M. de S.—Oh! for personal—family reasons. Because—I want to make peace with my wife.

Jacq.—Peace? Don't you get along well together?

M. de S.—Not very; as you can readily see.

Jacq.—Through her fault or yours?

M. de S.—Through mine.

Jacq.—The deuce!

M. de S.—I had troubles outside, serious troubles, which made me ill-natured to such an extent that I teased and annoyed her and was aggressive.

Jacq.—But I cannot see any too clearly how a third can contribute to a peace of this nature.

M. de S.—You will furnish a means for me to make known to her, delicately, without explanation or friction, that my intentions have changed.

Jacq.—Then you intend to become reconciled—to be more closely united?

M. de S.—No—no—quite the contrary.

Jacq.—Pardon—I don't exactly understand.

M. de S.—I desire to reëstablish and maintain a *status quo* of pacific neutrality. A sort of Platonic peace. (Laughing.) But I am entering into details that cannot, of course, interest you.

Jacq.—Kindly again pardon me, but as I am to play a part in this affair, I should like to know precisely what this part is.

M. de S.—Oh! the part of conciliator.

Jacq.—Then you wish peace with a treaty granting you entire liberty.

M. de S.—That's it exactly.

Jacq.—Which means that after the troubles you spoke of a moment or two ago, troubles now happily ended, you desire

tranquility at home to enjoy the happiness you have conquered without.

M. de S.—In brief, my dear fellow, the present situation between my wife and me is strained, very strained, and I prefer not to be entirely alone with her at first, since my position would be most awkward.

Jacq.—My dear sir, if that's the case I'll remain.

M. de S.—The entire evening?

Jacq.—The entire evening.

M. de S.—Thanks. You're truly a friend. I'll show my gratitude, when occasion offers.

Jacq.—Don't mention it, my dear fellow. (Both are silent awhile.) You were at the opera yesterday?

M. de S.—To be sure.

Jacq.—It came off smoothly?

M. de S.—Admirably.

Jacq.—Did Santelli score a great personal success?

M. de S.—Not a success, a triumph. They recalled her six times.

Jacq.—She's truly very clever.

M. de S.—Admirable; no one ever sang better. In the first act she has a magnificent recitative: "O Prince of believers, listen to my prayer," which brought the entire orchestra to their feet. And in the third, after her phrase: "Pure paradise of beauty," such enthusiasm I had never before seen.

Jacq.—She was quite satisfied?

M. de S.—Delighted, overwhelmed.

Jacq.—You know her very well?

M. de S.—Oh! yes, this great while. I even had supper at her house, with some friends, after the performance.

Jacq.—Were there many of you?

M. de S.—No, less than a dozen. She was delightful.

Jacq.—Is she charming in intimacy?

M. de S.—Exquisite. And then, she's a woman. I know not if you agree with me, but I come across few women.

Jacq.—(Laughing.) I think I've come across some.

M. de S.—Oh! yes, you meet women who appear to be such, but are not.

Jacq.—Explain yourself.

M. de S.—Really, our women, our society women, with very rare exceptions, are merely show-objects; pretty, genteel, but without charm elsewhere than in their drawing-rooms. Their true rôle consists in compelling admiration for their exterior grace, factitious and superficial.

Jacq.—They are loved, nevertheless.

M. de S.—Rarely.

Jacq.—Permit me—

M. de S.—Yes, by dreamers; but true men—the passionate, positive and tender—do not love the society woman of to-day, who is incapable of love. Besides, my dear fellow, look round you. You know the liaisons, for everything is known; can you mention even one amour, an immoderate amour, like those of former days, inspired by a woman in our circles? You must answer no, must you not? 'Tis flattering to have a mistress, 'tis true; it flatters, it amuses and then it wearies. But now look at the women of the theatre, there is not one that has not at least five or six passions among her assets—acts of folly and ruin, duels and suicides. They are loved, these women, because they know how to make themselves beloved and are loving—are real women. Yes, they have preserved the art of conquering man; the seductive smile, the enticing manner, the art of enmeshing and taking captive our heart, of bewitching our eyes, even when they are not, strictly speaking, beautiful. A strength of assault and invasion which is never to be found among our women.

Jacq.—And Santelli is a seductress of this type.

M. de S.—The first among them all, perhaps. Ah! the minx! she knows how to make herself desired, that woman!

Jacq.—Nothing but that?

M. de S.—A woman never takes the trouble to make herself greatly desired, when she has no other intention.

Jacq.—The deuce! you'll make me think that last evening witnessed two *premières* for you.

M. de S.—Oh! no, my dear fellow, you must never imagine such things.

Jacq.—Really, you appear so satisfied, so triumphant, so desirous of establishing peace at home. If I'm mistaken, I regret it—for your sake.

M. de S.—We'll assume you're mistaken and—

Enter Madame de Sallus.

M. de Sallus.—(Gaily.) Well, my dear, he remains—he remains, and 'twas I that persuaded him.

Madame de Sallus.—My compliments—and how did you perform this miracle.

M. de S.—Very easily, by chatting.

Mad. de S.—And of what did you speak?

Jacques.—Of the happiness one feels when remaining tranquilly at home.

Mad. de S.—I have but little taste for that sort of happiness; I love to travel.

Jacq.—Indeed, there's a time for everything. Trips are sometimes tempestuous.

Mad. de S.—And your appointment, that very important appointment at nine; have you renounced it, Monsieur de Randol?

Jacq.—Yes, Madame.

Mad. de S.—You are changeable.

Jacq.—Not at all, not at all. I am opportuniste.

M. de S.—Kindly permit me to write a line or two. (He goes to his desk at the far end of the room; sits down and writes.)

Mad. de S.—(To Jacques.) What has happened?

Jacq.—Nothing, all goes well.

Mad. de S.—When shall we leave, then?

Jacq.—We won't leave.

Mad. de S.—Are you crazy? why not?

Jacq.—Don't ask me.

Mad. de S.—He's setting a trap for us, you may be sure.

Jacq.—Oh! no, he is quite tranquil and well content; without any suspicion.

Mad. de S.—Then, what?

Jacq.—Rest easy. He is happy.

Mad. de S.—But that's not true.

Jacq.—Yes, it is. He poured out his happiness on my bosom.

Mad. de S.—'Tis a feint; he wishes to watch us.

Jacq.—Oh! no; he is trustful and pacific. He is afraid only of you.

Mad. de S.—Of me?

Jacq.—Yes, indeed. As you were afraid of him just now.

Mad. de S.—You're losing your mind. Heavens! but you're trifling!

Jacq.—Come, I'll wager that it will be he that goes out this evening.

Mad. de S.—In that case, let us leave immediately,

Jacq.—Oh! no. I tell you there is no longer anything to fear.

Mad. de S.—Really you will finish by exasperating me with your blindness.

M. de S.—(From the desk.) My dear, I've good news to tell you. I've obtained possession again of your box at the opera.

Mad. de S.—Really you are excessively kind to furnish me a means of applauding so frequently Madame Santelli.

M. de S.—(Still at the desk.) She is very talented.

Jacq.—And is charming, they say.

Mad. de S.—(Nervously.) 'Tis that sort of a woman, only, that pleases men.

Jacq.—You are unjust.

Mad. de S.—Oh! my dear Monsieur, 'tis only for them that men commit follies. And that is, you know, the sole measure of love.

M. de S.—(Still at the desk.) Pardon, my dear, they do not marry them, and that is the only real folly man can commit for woman.

Mad. de S..—That's a fine statement! Yet you submit to all their caprices.

Jacq..—Having nothing to lose, they have nothing to preserve.

Mad. de S..—Ah! man is indeed a sad creature. He marries a young woman because she is good—only to abandon her the next day—and madly dote upon a woman of the town, who is no longer young, simply because she is not good, because many men, men famous and rich, have been pressed in her arms. The more she has had, the more is she courted, and the more dearly is she prized and respected, with this peculiar Parisian respect which distinguishes nothing else than the degree of notoriety—due solely to the noise they create or whence it comes. Ah! you are indeed pretty creatures, you men!

M. de S..—(Still at the desk, smiling.) Be careful. We might be tempted to believe that you're jealous.

Mad. de S..—I? Pray, for whom do you take me?

Enter a servant.

Servant.—Dinner is served. (He walks over to the desk and hands *M. de Sallus* a letter.)

Madame de Sallus.—(To *Jacques*.) Your arm, Monsieur.

Jacques.—I love you!

Mad. de S..—So little!

Jacq..—With all my soul!

M. de Sallus.—(Reading his letter.) By Jove! that's good. I'll certainly have to go out this evening.

The *Household Peace* of Guy de Maupassant is one of the best specimens of the better class of French comedy in the latter half of the nineteenth century, though its author was not specially equipped for his work. A native of Normandy, where he was born in 1850, he completed his education at the college of

Rouen, after which he became a clerk in the naval department at Paris, though occupying his spare time in literary work, under the guidance of Gustave Flaubert. Joining the younger branch of the naturalistic school, at the head of which was Zola, he began by contributing to the *Soirées de Médan*. At the age of twenty-nine he produced his first play, the *Histoire du Vieux Temps*, or *History of the Olden Time*, which met with fair success. This was followed by a volume of lyrics, and by a prose story, which revealed very strong, but hitherto unsuspected powers in the writer. Now his reputation was made, and his works were much in demand; so that within the next ten years he published about twenty volumes of fiction. But he worked too hard, and in 1891 his mind gave way, partly under the influence of stimulants. After attempting suicide, he was confined in an asylum, where he died in July, 1893, still only in his forty-third year.

THE IRON MANUFACTURER

(LE MAÎTRE DE FORGES)

BY

GEORGES OHNET.

(*Translated by Grace Leslie.*)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MOULINET.

PHILIPPE DERBLAY.

BACHELIN.

DUC DE BLIGNY.

BARON DE PRÉFONT

OCTAVE.

THE GENERAL.

GOBERT.

DR. SERVAN.

THE PREFECT.

DE PONTAC.

IEAN.

A WORKMAN.

A SERVANT.

CLAIRE DE BEAULIEU.

ATHÉNAÏS MOULINET, afterwards Duchess de Bligny.

MARQUISE DE BEAULIEU.

BARONNE DE PRÉFONT.

SUZANNE DERBLAY.

BRIGITTE.

The Iron Manufacturer.

PRELUDE.

Le Maître de Forges, or the Iron Manufacturer, is commonly accepted as one of the strongest society dramas of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Moreover it does not take for its theme conjugal infidelity, still the stock subject of French dramatists. The Duc de Bligny is affianced to Claire, daughter of the Marquise de Beaulieu, but deserts her on learning that the family has become impoverished through the loss of a lawsuit. Thereupon, in a thoughtless moment, she bestows her hand on Philippe Derblay, the iron master, the strongest character in the play. But she does not love him, and though the two live together in the same house, it is not as man and wife. De Bligny renews to Madame Derblay the vows he had withheld from Mdlle. de Beaulieu. Her husband interferes; a duel is arranged, and Claire, who has learned to love Philippe, throws herself before him and intercepts the bullet of the Duc, exclaiming, as the curtain falls, "Oh! How happy I am going to be!" Her prediction was probably fulfilled; for while saving the life of Philippe, Claire was not seriously injured.

ACT FIRST.

A hall in the castle of Beaulieu, with window opening on the terrace, and furniture of Louis XV style.

SCENE I.

The Marquise, the Baronne, Claire.

Marquise.—(Looking at Claire, who is reclining in a large arm-chair.) Claire . . . Claire . . .

Claire.—(Turning slowly.) Mother!

Mar.—What are you doing there, so sad and absorbed?

Cla.—Nothing, mother.

Mar.—Now, my child, come near us and talk.

Cla.—(Rising after a little time.) This warm air has stu-pefied me. (She goes slowly toward her mother.) How long is it since we received any letters from St. Petersburg?

Mar.—About two months.

Cla.—(Sadly.) Two months!

Mar.—Why think incessantly of that and torment yourself so?

Cla.—Why should not I think of my fiancé? And why should I not torment myself, as you say, to find out the reasons of his silence?

Mar.—I confess it is hard to explain. The duke of Bligny, my nephew, after spending a week with us last year, promised to return to Paris during the winter. At first he wrote that political complications were detaining him at his post in Russia; then he pretended that he was waiting for the summer to return to France. Summer came, but no duke. Now here is autumn, and Gaston does not even give any more excuses; he does not even take the trouble of writing to us. My dear girls, everything is degenerating; the men of our times no longer know how to be polite.

Cla.—Yet, if he were ill? If it were impossible for him to send word?

Mar.—The ambassador would have informed us.

Baronne.—Your mother is right—

Cla.—He promised me so many times to pass the winter at Paris, and I planned such a fête in honor of his return! You must confess, mother, that he is not jealous. And yet, wherever we have gone, I have received much attention. Even here, in this desert of Beaulieu, it has not ceased, and as for our neighbor, the iron manufacturer—

Mar.—M. Derblay?

Bar.—Oh! that is quite plain. Since his first visit to the castle, when he came to offer excuses for his encroachments on your grounds, he has become a devout worshipper before Claire.

Mar.—I find him pleasant enough in his devotion. But my sight must be failing; I had not noticed that little proceeding. I shall watch.

Cla.—(Gravely.) Mother, the attentions of M. Derblay are respectful, and I have no cause for complaint. But then the duke is not here to defend himself, and he ought to know that this rôle of Penelope waiting the return of him that never comes might weary me.

Bar.—If I were in your place, it would be a long time before I should make more tapestry.

Cla.—It is no merit to me to do as I do. I could love no other man but the duke.

Mar.—You picture him to yourself, and that is what annoys me. Gaston and you have grown up together. You believed that this community of existence ought to last, and that you could not be happy otherwise. How foolish all that is!

Cla.—Mother—

Mar.—You are deceiving yourself greatly about the duke. He is trifling and frivolous. He has, you know, selfish habits hard to correct. And now do you wish to know my inmost thought? I should not see this marriage formed without great anxiety.

Cla.—(With emotion.) Mother, this is the first time you have spoken so to me. It seems as if you wish to prepare me to learn of some bad news. Are there any reasons for the duke's absence? Have you learnt—

Mar.—(Disturbed at Claire's agitation.) Nothing, my child. I am only astonished at a silence so prolonged that it becomes more than diplomatic.

Cla.—(Coaxingly.) Come, mother, still have a little patience. The duke is going to give us a surprise by arriving from St. Petersburg unexpectedly.

Mar.—I hope so, my daughter, since you desire it.

Bar.—At all events, when my husband comes from Paris, he will perhaps be better informed.

Cla.—Here comes my brother along the terrace with M. Bachelin.

Enter Octave, in hunting costume, and Bachelin.

Octave.—Come in, M. Bachelin.

Bachelin.—Ladies—madame la marquise—my salutations.

Mar.—Good day, my dear Bachelin. (To Octave.) You left early this morning? I did not hear you. Have you had a good day's hunt?

Oct.—Yes, mother, thanks to M. Derblay, who led me through his reserve—

Mar.—Evidently the iron manufacturer pleases you.

Oct.—It would be impossible to find a better companion. He told me he will call to-day with his sister, who has just come from the convent, and wishes to present her to you.

Mar.—My dear Bachelin, it has been an age since we have seen you.

Bach.—I have been very much occupied, madame la marquise, with important business—the sale of La Varenne—

Oct.—Ah! have the d'Estrelles at last found a purchaser?

Bach.—Yes. One that has paid a decent price, I can tell you. He is a great manufacturer of Paris; he told me he even had the honor of knowing the family of madame la marquise. No doubt that is the reason he has sought the neighborhood of Beaulieu.

Mar.—And may we know this gentleman's name?

Bach.—It is M. Moulinet.

Bar.—(Rising.) M. Moulinet!

Cla.—The father of Athénaïs?

Bar.—Yes, certainly he knows us. His daughter was our companion at the convent—our enemy, our rival. There were always quarrels and battles between her and us. The pupils were divided into two camps, one of the citizens, the other of the nobles. At the head of one, Mademoiselle Moulinet; at the head of the other, Mademoiselle de Beaulieu. We were spiteful and abused each other.

Bach.—The world is little!

Bar.—Otherwise, Athénaïs is very pretty, very intelligent—and revengeful! Unless time has softened her, the day when you see her jump at the neck of one of us, you may be sure that it is for murder or for strangling.

Bach.—M. Moulinet is very rich?

Bar.—Immensely rich. He has established at Villepinte that immense chocolate factory. His applied chemistry has brought him millions. And now, that is your new neighbor. He's going to play lord of the castle. Poor fellow! He will have the manners of his gardener.

Mar.—They have what manners they may. But let us leave M. Moulinet. Tell me about our lawsuit in England.

Bach.—Yes, madame la marquise.

Bar.—We will leave you, aunt.

Mar.—Octave, go and see if any one has gone to the station to meet the baron.

Oct.—Yes, mother.

(*Exeunt separately Octave, Claire and the Baronne.*)

Mar.—Well, my dear Bachelin?

Bach.—(Anxiously.) Bad news, madame la marquise, and for me, as an old servant of the family, it is a subject of real grief. The lawsuit undertaken by the late M. le Marquis de Beaulieu is in danger.

Mar.—(After a little time.) You are not telling me the whole truth, Bachelin. If there was still a ray of hope, you would not be so disheartened. The courts have decided. The suit is lost. Is it not so?

Bach.—Alas! yes, madame la marquise. The cause was wrongly undertaken, and its failure is a terrible blow for the house of Beaulieu.

Mar.—Terrible, indeed! One which involves the ruin of my son and my daughter.

Bach.—(After a silence.) Oh! a loss of money is not fatal——(He stops.) If there was nothing but that.

Mar.—There is still something more? You have news of the Duke de Bligny?

Bach.—Yes, madame la marquise. As you directed me to examine your nephew's affairs, here is the information given me: M. le duc de Bligny has been in Paris for six weeks.

Mar.—For six weeks! And we did not know it!

Bach.—Your nephew took great care that you should not know it.

Mar.—He did not come to us. And he does not come yet, though he knows the blow that has come upon us! For he does know, doesn't he?

Bach.—He does, madame la marquise. He was one of the first to learn it.

Mar.—Ah! you are right, Bachelin; this hurts me cruelly. The duke has deserted us. What he wished was our fortune. The fortune has disappeared, the fiancé retires. Money is the watchword of this venal and covetous age. Virtue, beauty, intelligence count for nothing. People no longer say, Room for the worthy; they cry, Room for the rich! Then, since we are almost poor, they know us no longer.

Bach.—Madame la marquise, I think you are too severe on our age. Certain positive ideas rule. But there are yet disinterested men, for whom beauty, virtue and intelligence are the qualities which make a woman enviable to all. I do not say that I know many such men; but I know at least one, and in this case one is enough.

Mar.—What do you mean?

Bach.—Simply this: that a worthy friend of mine has not been able to see Mademoiselle de Beaulieu without falling deeply in love. Knowing that she was engaged to the duke,

he has not dared to make known his feelings. But now, knowing her to be free, he will speak, if you deign to authorize him.

Mar.—(Coldly.) You mean M. Philippe Derblay; is it not so?

Bach.—Yes, madame la marquise.

Mar.—I am not ignorant of the sentiments my daughter has inspired in the iron manufacturer. He has not concealed them enough.

Bach.—Ah! he does indeed love Mademoiselle Claire sincerely! But you do not know M. Derblay well enough, madame la marquise, to be able to judge his worth.

Mar.—I know that he is very much esteemed in the country.

Bach.—And justly. I have watched M. Philippe and his sister, Mademoiselle Suzanne, grow up. Their father liked to call me his friend. This explains to you, madame la marquise, my boldness in making known M. Derblay's feelings. In my view, he has only one failing: his name is written in a single word, without an apostrophe. But search well, and who knows what may be found? The family is very old. Under the Revolution there was great confusion; honorable families set themselves against each other; the letters may have done so, too.

Mar.—Let him keep his name such as it is. It marks him as a man of honor, and in our time that is enough.

Bach.—M. Derblay would be very happy, madame, if he heard you.

Mar.—Do not repeat to him anything I have just said. Mademoiselle would not accept any person's generosity. And with her character, as I know it, she will probably die unmarried. Thank God, my friend, that the double blow about to fall upon her will find her strong and resigned!

Bach.—Madame la marquise, if I may be permitted to offer advice, I urge you to say nothing of this yet to Mademoiselle Claire. For her there will always be time enough to suffer.

Mar.—You are right. As to my son, I ought to inform him of this misfortune. (She rings. A servant enters.) Ask M. le marquis to come to me. (The servant goes out.)

Bach.—After what has happened, madame la marquise, remember that M. Derblay would be the happiest of men if he

were ever permitted to hope. He will wait, for he is not one of those whose affections change.

Enter Octave.

Octave.—Well?

Mar.—My child, I wish to inform you of some serious news, which causes me real sorrow.

Oct.—Is it about the lawsuit?

Mar.—Yes.

Oct.—It is lost.

Mar.—You knew it, then?

Oct.—I had my doubts. I have respected your views, mother, but I was completely convinced that the case could not be sustained. So I have been prepared for its failure. I dreaded it only for my sister, whose dowry is involved. But there is a very simple way of arranging matters. You can give her the part of your fortune you have reserved for me. But do not worry about me; I shall withdraw entirely from the affair.

Mar.—(With emotion.) My dear child!

Oct.—It is all very simple.

Mar.—Come, let me embrace you!

Oct.—I love my sister, and shall do anything that she may be happy. But while we are talking of gloomy matters (to Bachelin), come now, Bachelin, don't you believe that the silence of our cousin de Bligny is connected with the failure of the suit?

Mar.—(With anxiety.) You are mistaken, my child. The duke—

Oct.—(Smiling.) Oh! do not be afraid, mother. If Gaston hesitates to keep to his engagements now that Mademoiselle de Beaulieu is poor, we are not the people to take him by the collar. And I believe, in this case, that if the Duke de Bligny does not marry my sister, it will be so much the worse for him and so much the better for her.

Mar.—Good!

Bach.—Very good, monsieur le marquis. If Mademoiselle de Beaulieu is not rich enough to tempt a fortune-hunter, she is perfect enough to captivate a true-hearted man.

Mar.—Not another word. Here she is.

Enter Claire, then the Baronne and the Baron.

Claire.—Mother, the baron has just come.

Baron.—My dear aunt. (He bows to her.) My salutations, Octave.

Mar.—Did you have a good journey, nephew?

Baron.—Excellent—a little warm, but still excellent.

Baronne.—Did you execute all my commissions?

Baron.—Everything, dear friend. Here is the jewel box.

Bar.—(Whispering.) Have you the information?

Baron.—(In a whisper.) I'm full of it. Get rid of Claire and Octave.

Bar.—Claire, will you help me unpack?

Cla.—Willingly.

Bar.—(To Octave.) Here, carry this box with care. They are the diamonds of the crown. (To the marquise.) My husband has some news.

(*Exeunt the Baronne, Claire and Octave.*)

Bach.—(Starting to go.) Madame la marquise, I'm going—

Mar.—Stay, Bachelin. You are one of the family. (She sits down.) Well, nephew, speak; do not spare me. I know already that the Duke de Bligny has been in Paris for six weeks.

Baron.—(Bitterly.) Oh, marquise, do you really know that? And do you also know that he is about to get married?

Mar.—(Stupefied.) Get married?

Baron.—Yes, my dear aunt. Pardon my rude frankness, but in such matters I think it best to come straight to the point.

Mar.—(Slowly.) To get married!

Baron.—The duke did all in his power to keep it quiet. But the future father-in-law is, it seems, a citizen more vulgar than discreet. He exults, good man! His daughter—think of it!—his daughter a duchess! It seems the duke, just arrived from St. Petersburg, joined a large baccarat party, which had been in progress for some time at the club. Soon he was at the end of his ready cash, and drew on the bank of the club. He kept

on playing at such a rate that at the end of a week the charge against him was two hundred and fifty thousand francs. He completely lost his head, dealing like a deaf man and punting like a blind one. In two nights he regained all, then lost a hundred million francs, and finally stopped with a debt of two hundred thousand francs.

Bach.—That was heavy play!

Baron.—Very heavy! So much the more, as Gaston had not the first cent to pay with. The situation was critical. Goodness! the duke might apply to his family. He did not dream of it, or rather he did not wish to. It was then that Providence intervened in the form of the future father-in-law, whom, they tell me, Gaston had seen only once before. He entered deliberately upon the matter and addressed Bligny something like this: Monsieur le duc, you owe two hundred thousand francs. You must procure this amount within twenty-four hours, and you cannot procure it! These two hundred thousand francs I shall give you. I have an immense fortune, and do not wish a man like myself, who will give a dowry of ten million to his only daughter, to let the name of one of the noblest families in his country be compromised for ten thousand miserable louis.

Bach.—Prodigious!

Baron.—Exactly. The unfortunate Bligny was dazzled; it seemed to him that he was before a man made entirely of gold. His benefactor's money box unexpectedly opened. He put in his little finger, his hand followed, and, as in a pulley gear, all went—honor, too! (The marquise silently wipes her eyes with her handkerchief and sobs, the baron and Bachelin approach and try to comfort her.)

Bach.—Madame la marquise.

Mar.—Leave me alone. It relieves me. This shock is so dreadful! I loved Gaston so much. I brought him up so carefully! I have been a second mother to him. And this is how he repays me! Oh! Ingratitude! Ingratitude!

Baron.—My dear aunt!

Mar.—(Composing herself.) That is all. (She rises, then with firmness:) We must use great precautions before Claire.

You know her; she is proud and self-willed. Her father was just like her—heart of gold, but head of iron. She was just now talking of Gaston. The blow will come with full force upon her.

Baron.—My dear aunt, don't you think that application might be made to Bligny? He has been entrapped. It may be possible to release him. And if you consent, I myself shall be entirely at your disposal.

Mar.—No; we are not such as humiliate themselves and plead. Our position, sad though it may be, is blameless and honorable. I would not like to change it.

Baron.—Let come what may! The good rôle is on your side. And if you have occasion to shed some tears in private, at least you need not blush before any one. I should not say that of Bligny.

Servant.—(Entering.) Monsieur and Mademoiselle Derblay ask if madame la marquise will receive them.

Mar.—Oh! at such a time! (Bachelin makes a motion of entreaty.) Ah, well, let it be so. (To servant.) Show them in.

Baron.—My dear aunt, I am really not presentable. I am still dusty from my journey.

Mar.—Well, go, my friend, and please inform Claire and Octave. (Exit Baron.)

Enter Phillippe, Suzanne and Derblay.

Serv.—Monsieur and Mademoiselle Derblay.

Philippe.—Madame la marquise (After a pause.) Permit me to present my sister Suzanne.

Mar.—My son had informed me of Mademoiselle Derblay's coming. I thank you, monsieur, for wishing to bring her to me. (To Suzanne.) My gray hairs do not frighten you? Then come, let me embrace you, my dear child!

Suzanne.—With all my heart, madame.

Phil.—I do not know how to thank you, madame, for the kind welcome you have given my sister. She is a child who needs lessons and advice. She could not know any better than yours, if you will be so good as to do her the favor of interesting yourself in her.

Mar.—(To Philippe.) She is charming. Come, my child. Is it long since you came from your convent? (They go out on the terrace.)

Bach.—Well, my dear friend, Mademoiselle Claire is not here. . . . You are quite out of your element, eh?

Phil.—My state is a singular one. For two weeks, each time I come here, my heart beats fast at the thought of being in the presence of Mademoiselle de Beaulieu, and yet I am distressed if I do not happen to see her. . . . She troubles me, she frightens me; before her I become a mere child.

Bach.—(Smiling.) You love her!

Phil.—It is very foolish! How could I, a working man, unused to society, think of this young lady, so beautiful, so proud, and because of that, perhaps, more bewitching? I have noticed that she is grave, thoughtful, and a little anxious about the duke's absence, no doubt. And in spite of myself, in spite of my care, I have fallen in love with her. I forgot the distance between us, and no longer noticed the difference of our families. The voice of reason, the counsel of experience (motion of assent from Bachelin)—I have listened to none. And now it is finished, I no longer have control of myself, I am entirely given up to that passion which makes me experience a deep joy, a delicious intoxication, which gives me everything, in short, except hope. For my madness stops there. I do not hope, I give you my word.

Bach.—And why not?

Phil.—Because I know that it is not enough merely to wish for something. Because Mademoiselle de Beaulieu has never done me the honor of noticing my existence. Because, finally, she is noble, rich, betrothed to her cousin, and will be a duchess.

Bach.—Truly! Oh, well! but if I tell you that Mademoiselle de Beaulieu is no longer rich, will probably not be a duchess, and that only an honest man like you has any chance of being approved of by her?

Phil.—(Moved.) Oh, take care! Do not say such a thing lightly.

Bach.—Is that my habit? At this moment I am betraying a professional secret. But it is for your interest. . . . Made-

moiselle de Beaulieu is ruined financially, but she does not know it. The Duke de Bligny has deserted her, but she does not surmise it.

Phil.—Ruined and deserted! Oh! what need has she for a fortune? It is the only quality she lacks, is it not?

Bach.—Yes, certainly; and it is under this aspect of disinterestedness that I have shown it to you.

Phil.—Oh! tell Madame de Beaulieu. Tell Mademoiselle Claire. But no, say nothing! She is proud and haughty. The idea that she owed some obligation to a man about to be her husband would make her lost to me, and she would repulse me. Inform the marquise, have her approve of my scruples. Above all, be on my side. Oh! I would kneel to receive the hand of mademoiselle. But I wish her to believe herself still rich and to be free to accept me or refuse me herself. And should I, when marrying her, inform her of all I know, still she would have done me a favor.

Bach.—There! there! you are in a great hurry! Youth and enthusiasm are indeed beautiful! But let us proceed in a more reasonable way and await the time. It is a secret of the finest politics.

(The Marquise and Suzanne return. The Baronne, Claire, Octave and the Baron enter from the side.)

Mar.—(Introducing Octave and Claire to Suzanne.) My dear child, my son, the Marquis de Beaulieu—my daughter Claire.

Cla.—You are very welcome, mademoiselle.

Suz.—Before ever seeing you, mademoiselle, my brother taught me to admire you. Now that I know you, I feel that it will be easy indeed to love you.

Cla.—And I, mademoiselle, love you already.

(A servant entering brings a card on a tray to the marquise.)

Mar.—(Putting on her eyeglasses.) Monsieur and Mademoiselle Moulinet.

Bar.—This is a little too much!

Mar.—What do these people want of us?

Bach.—Goodness! madame la marquise, probably Monsieur and Mademoiselle Moulinet, having just moved to the country, judge it proper to pay some visits in the neighborhood.

Bar.—I suppose, aunt, that you are not going to indulge in familiarities with the Moulinet family.

Baron.—(Gently.) I think, my dear, that your aunt needs no advice.

Mar.—The situation is very embarrassing.

Cla.—But mother, it seems to me rather difficult to close our door now. From their carriage they could see us on the terrace. To say simply that we are not receiving, would be answering with rudeness to a proceeding, on the whole, courteous. Is it worthy of us? We must receive them, and, once the visit is over, it will stop there.

Mar.—Yes, my child, you are right. We must do as you say. Say that we shall receive them.

Bar.—(To Octave.) Octave! The aristocracy of intelligence has come! M. Moulinet is its most respectable representative.

Enter Moulinet and Athénaïs.

Servant.—Monsieur and Mademoiselle Moulinet.

Athénaïs.—(With vivacity, taking Claire's hand.) Ah! my dear, I am so glad to see you!

Cla.—(Conducting Athénaïs to the Marquise and introducing her.) My mother—

Ath.—(To the Marquise.) It gives me great joy to meet again Mademoiselle de Beaulieu. Since I have known her, and that has been a long time (smiling), to imitate her has always been my rule of action. I am sure it would be difficult to find a more perfect model.

Cla.—(Quietly.) Only to imitate me? You are too modest!

Bar.—(Aside.) It is the first time you ever were!

Ath.—(Going to the Baronne.) And my dear Sophie, too! What good inspiration made me come!

Moulinet.—(Approaching.) Mademoiselle de Beaulieu and madame la baronne were schoolmates of my daughter at Sacré-Cœur. I always did approve, and now more than ever, having

placed Athénais in that institution, which is without dispute the best in Paris. There young people receive a first-rate education and form very desirable acquaintances.

Mar.—(With a smile.) So I perceive.

Mou.—As for me, I am very much moved, madame la marquise, at the favor you do me by permitting me to offer you my compliments. I owe them to you for several reasons—first, as a newcomer in this part of the country, where I have just bought some land. (Leaning back.) A very important place, La Varenne aux d'Estrelles. I did not want it specially, but my daughter, who is very well informed, made me understand that, with a large fortune like mine, we must have some property—

Ath.—(Uneasily.) Father!

Mou.—(To his daughter, in a low voice.) Be quiet! (Aloud.) And then I can tell you, madame la marquise, as to opinions, I am liberal, but as for connections, I recognize only the aristocracy!

Mar.—Believe me, sir, I am very much touched by the feelings you express with such complete frankness.

Mou.—(To his daughter, in a low tone.) You see!

Mar.—They are worthy of a man who has reached the high position which you have won by your intelligence.

Mou.—(With ease.) Such a man am I. And if my character has reached you, madame la marquise, I believe that we shall be agreeable neighbors.

Bar.—(Aside.) What a monster this man is!

Mou.—You know, no doubt, La Varenne? You know the castle is historical? I have the room in which emperor Charles V slept; so they say. Yes, madame la marquise, I sleep in the imperial bed! And I am not prouder for all that.

Ath.—(Unable to contain herself.) Father!

Mou.—(In a low voice, to Athénais.) Be quiet! Everything is going very well!

Ath.—Ask madame la marquise to show us the terrace of the castle. The view there, I have been told, is marvellous. (She goes toward the back.)

Mar.—(Aside.) Is she calling off the dogs? (Aloud.) Oh! willingly.

Mou.—(Going out.) The view at La Varenne, madame la marquise—if you honor me by coming to my house, we shall compare them.

Claire, Athénaïs.

Athénaïs.—(Stopping Claire on the threshold.) Wait, will you?

Claire.—You wish to speak to me?

Ath.—Yes. You cannot doubt my pleasure at being with you again. For the two years since we parted I have thought much and seen much. I have had a little experience and my feelings have singularly changed. Thus, formerly we were not exactly good friends.

Cla.—But—

Ath.—(Gayly.) Oh! do not contradict me! I did not love you! I can admit now that I was jealous of you, and my dream was to be your equal.

Cla.—My equal! Goodness! I who have so little! You surpass me! Beauty, elegance, luxury, you have all.

Ath.—All, it is true, except a name!

Cla.—Oh, well! but a name, nowadays, can be bought. There are all prices—small, medium and large. In short, if you desire nobility, you will do well in offering yourself the best. Your means will allow it.

Ath.—(Repressing an angry motion.) Truly. And really, at this minute it is a question of marriage with me.

Cla.—(Ironical.) You have my sincere compliments.

Ath.—It is not compliments I want from you.

Cla.—What, then?

Ath.—Your advice.

Cla.—Advice? On what?

Ath.—On the choice I'm about to make.

Cla.—Really, you overwhelm me. To ask my advice on your family affairs! I assure you that embarrasses me. We know each other so little! Could you not content yourself?

Ath.—Impossible!

Cla.—I do not understand.

Ath.—Listen attentively; the subject is worth the trouble. The marriage in question is a very grand one, and surpasses all my hopes. It would be a question of a crown for me.

Cla.—Royal?

Ath.—No, only ducal. I would be a duchess!

Cla.—(Astonished.) Duchess! (She remains thoughtful.)

Ath.—You do not ask the name of my fiancé?

Cla.—(With difficulty.) I? Why should I?

Ath.—Yet you must know. It is my duty to tell you. His name is the Duke de Bligny. (Claire gives a start, and, in order not to fall, leans against the table.) M. de Bligny is your relative, your childhood friend. They even speak of some project of union between you. I have come to you loyally to inform you and consult with you.

Cla.—(In stifled voice.) Consult me? On what?

Ath.—On the true position of the duke toward you. You understand that if it were true that you are promised to one another, you could accuse me of having robbed you of your fiancé. The duke has asked me in marriage, but I do not love him. I hardly even know him. He or another, what does it matter to me? Come! Be frank. Do you love him? Will my marriage with him wound you? Will it only displease you? Say a single word, and I swear to you I pledge myself to break the engagement.

Cla.—(After a movement of joy, which she soon represses.) I thank you. But be assured that I am not a woman that a person deserts and disdains. If the duke were engaged to me, do not believe that he would marry another. No! When we are children, among cousins it is the rule that the family betroth you and marry you with smiles on both sides. It is a game of children. But we grow quickly, reason comes, and the exigencies of life reverse all these projects. The duke has asked your hand, you say? Marry him. It would be truly regrettable if you did not marry. You are worthy of each other.

Ath.—How happy you make me! Just think, what a dream! Your relative, your equal this time truly, and a duchess!

Cla.—(Bitterly.) All you desire.

Ath.—Let me kiss you. (She kisses Claire, who draws back at the touch of her lips.) Know that I am your sincere and devoted friend.

Enter the Baronne.

Baronne.—Well! what have you two been doing for this half hour?

Ath.—We were chatting. But we have finished. I am going to find my father. (Exit.)

Cla.—(With a shiver.) You knew that he was about to get married. Why did you not tell me?

Bar.—Claire!

Cla.—Betrayed! Deserted! For her! And you let me hear it from her lips! She could freely give me such a blow! But you were her accomplices! Is there not one among you that loves me?

Bar.—Please! You frighten me. Come, my dear.

Cla.—(Shaking with sobs.) He! He! Oh, unhappy that I am! Unhappy!

Mar.—(Entering.) Oh, goodness! My poor child! Claire!

Cla.—You know, mother?

Mar.—Her father just now told me.

Cla.—Oh! The end has come. My life is ruined! This desertion will always weigh on me, and if, after my humiliation, I should be foolish enough to think of marrying, who would want me now?

Mar.—Who? You shall choose. Right here, M. Derblay will accept your hand thankfully.

Cla.—(Stopping in the midst of her tears.) M. Derblay?

Mar.—Yes. I tell you that only to reassure you. Who can come near you without loving you? Do you wish us to go back to Paris? Do you want to travel? Tell me; I am ready to do everything that will satisfy and console you. What do you decide?

Cla.—(In despair.) How do I know? I would like to disappear in an instant—to escape from others and myself. I have both hatred and contempt. Alas! could I not die?

Mar.—Claire!

Bach.—(Enters, looking frightened.) Madame la marquise, pardon me, but something so surprising has happened. M. le Duc de Bligny is here!

Cla.—He! (She rises quickly.)

Bach.—In spite of all we can say to him, he insists on seeing you.

Mar.—I shall send him off, as he deserves.

Cla.—No, mother, we must not send away the Duke de Bligny.

Mar.—Why?

Cla.—(With energy.) Not for the world would I have him know that I suffer because of his desertion. Anything but his pity. Receive him, mother. (Bitterly.) The door is open to him, since it is not closed to his fiancée.

Mar.—But, my child—

Cla.—(To Bachelin.) Detain the duke a moment, and ask M. Derblay to speak with me. (Exit Bachelin.)

Mar.—M. Derblay?

Cla.—(Resolutely.) Yes, mother.

Mar.—(Uneasily.) But Yet

Cla.—You told me that I was free to dispose of my life. I pray you let me do it.

Enter Philippe.

Cla.—(To Philippe, who comes forward timidly and respectfully). Sir, our old friend, M. Bachelin, has told my mother that you do me the honor of desiring my hand. (Philippe bows without speaking.) I believe you an honest man. I think that in this proposal you knew, as all those around me, and for a long time before, perhaps, that the Duke de Bligny—

Philippe.—(With emotion.) Yes, mademoiselle, I knew it. And believe, even at this moment, if it depended on me to secure your happiness by bringing back the duke, I would not hesitate, were it at the price of my life.

Cla.—I thank you. But all is ended between the duke and

me. And the surest proof I can give you is that, if you still have the same feelings, I am ready to give you my hand.

Phil.—Mademoiselle— (He takes Claire's hand and bows with adoration.) Oh! you make me very happy.

Buch.—(At the back.) The duke!

Cla.—(Seeing Philippe hesitating what to do.) Stay, monsieur.

The Duke enters.

Duke.—(Very moved.) Madame la marquise—Claire—you see my trouble—my grief—my regrets! On arriving at La Varenne, I learned of an outrageous intrusion, an infamous proceeding, and one to which I am bound to declare aloud that I am not an accomplice. I may have made some mistakes, behaved thoughtlessly, with ingratitude; but to have authorized such outrageous conduct before my relatives, no, that, on my honor, I have not done! (To the marquise.) I owe you some explanations; allow me to make them. Claire, I will not leave till you pardon me.

Cla.—(Advancing with feigned tranquillity.) But, duke, you owe no explanations and have no need of pardon. You are about to marry? But you had a right to do so, it seems to me. Were you not free, as I myself?

Duke.—(Stupefied.) Claire!

Cla.—Your fiancée has just told me the happy news; that is well, and I do not wish to be behindhand with you. Monsieur Derblay. (Philippe draws near.) I must present you to each other. (To Philippe.) M. le Duc de Bligny, my cousin. (To the duke.) M. Derblay, my fiancé. (Curtain.)

ACT II.

A little drawing-room in front of the nuptial chamber.

Brigitte, Suzanne, Octave.

Brigitte.—(Who has kindled a fire in the fireplace.) Come in sir; come in; you are welcome here. (She goes out.)

Suzanne.—Excuse the familiarity of Brigitte, monsieur le

marquis. She has been our nurse, and she considers the house as her own.

Octave.—Her welcome is precious to me, if it is the expression of the thought of her masters.

Suz.—How could it be otherwise? Are you not my brother's brother?

Oct.—That is true—almost yours. Ah, well! do you want to do me a kindness?

Suz.—What?

Oct.—Do not call me solemnly monsieur le marquis, as you do, but treat me as a good friend.

Suz.—I promise.

Oct.—Now that we are free from the ceremony of this marriage, I think that we may unbend a little.

Suz.—Ah, gladly! very willingly! Philippe is a little grave for me—

Oct.—You are accustomed to regard him rather as a father—

Suz.—Yes! as the tenderest father. If you knew how good he has been to me, what many delicate cares and sweet attentions he bestowed when I was little, how many nights he passed working for me—always for me! I have been a burden in his life.

Oct.—You?

Suz.—He was engineer of the mines, and a fine career opened before him; but without hesitation he left all and launched out into business to set up again our father's manufactures and make a fortune for me. I owe him everything. Thus, I love him deeply, and I wish with all my heart that he may be happy as he deserves.

Oct.—I envy what he has been able to do for you! I would have been happy to have a sweet, frail sister to love and protect. What protection could I exercise toward Claire? It is she, rather, who has shielded me. A character, my sister!

Suz.—That is what I thought. But she will love Philippe. He is so good. You have not been able yet to appreciate him at his full value. The marriage was so hasty.

Oct.—(Laughing.) I think so. . . . A marriage at a fixed hour, settled like the expiration of a bill. There is no use saying anything.

Enter the Baron and Baronne.

Baronne.—(Entering like a whirlwind.) There is fire here? What good luck! The return across the dark park, along the water lit by the moon— Oh, my friends, I am frozen!

Moulinet.—(On the threshold.) I am not indiscreet?

Baron.—Come in, then, Monsieur Moulinet.

Mou.—My daughter is below with the bride, and I do not know what has become of the Duke de Bligny.

Bar.—Oh, you will find him again, never fear!

Mou.—And without you, monsieur le baron, who are my providence, I would not know whom to speak to; I would seem an intruder. (He goes to the baronne and talks with her; he seats himself on the cushion before the fire.)

Oct.—(Aside.) Well, enough of that! (To the baron.) It appears that you are the last blessing with your future father-in-law.

Baron.—That man worships me; he will not leave me; he clings to me. With all his foolish air, he is artful.

Oct.—He proves that by being here.

Baron.—Ah! the duke is in it.

Oct.—They hesitated about inviting him. But M. Derblay himself is responsible for the invitation.

Baron.—He is an honest man. As for M. Moulinet, lawyer Bachelin gives some strange details of the schemes he entertains in establishing himself in this country.

(The Duke enters, Suzanne, the Baronne, Octave being grouped near the fireplace.)

Oct.—You come from the drawing-room, duke—has everybody come?

Duke.—A moment ago.

Suz.—I am going to my brother.

Oet.—I go with you.

(*Exeunt.*)

Bar.—Those two are well bred.

Duke.—I was down stairs with the family; they have commenced to congratulate and embrace, and I thought I was one too many. From the rooms in the galleries I have come here.

Bar.—Do you know where you are? In the little room outside the nuptial chamber.

Duke.—(With an affected calm.) Ah! it is quite original.

Bar.—You are melancholy, Bligny.

Duke.—It is because I think that before long I will be tired like the couple must be to-day.

Mou.—(Coldly.) Monsieur le duc!

Baron.—In faith, listen. I remember that all the day of my marriage appeared very disagreeable to me.

Bar.—(To the baron.) Thanks!

Mou.—(To the baronne, with a knowing air.) M. le baron said, All the day! (He laughs.) In my time they called that day the happiest of one's life! It is true that then they married gayly. But nowadays they marry at midnight in a gloomy church, where the cold falls on you like a leaden mantle. Marriages after that fashion don't suit me! Three weeks hence I lead my daughter to the altar; the ceremony will take place at the Madeleine. I have commanded a mass in music, the most expensive of everything—choirs and solos. At the end, songs sung by opera singers—the best of everything! In the church, flowers everywhere; on the path of the procession, a row of green trees, and a velvet carpet down to the street. That is the right sort of a marriage mass. But the ceremony of this evening—that was a bad omen: the darkness, the bride who, under her white veil, looked like a spectre, those attendants that looked like ghosts!

Bar.—(To the duke.) I must say that the organ affected me terribly. When they began to play, tears filled my eyes. A great sadness fell on me, accompanied with presentiments—

Baron.—Oh! you are too impressionable.

Bar.—Without my English flask, I would have been ill.

Mou.—(To the duke.) And then, I remark without wishing

to offend any one, that there is not for the wedding party the least supper.

Duke.—(Severely.) Monsieur Moulinet!

Mou.—At other people's houses a wedding like that would be called a dry wedding. Now, for your wedding there will be a dinner; you will see that! A hundred covers at eighty francs a head. And when they go, they will not be empty, like to-day.

Duke.—Monsieur Moulinet, you talk too much. In consideration for all, be, I pray you, less communicative.

Mou.—But, my son-in-law——

Duke.—(Dryly.) To begin, I am not yet your son-in-law.

Mou.—Oh! you have my word——

Duke.—And when I am, do not call me so. If at all possible, do not call me anything.

Mou.—(Vexed.) Monsieur the duke. (Aside.) There is no use making resolutions, we will never be the equal of these people.

Athénaïs.—(Entering.) I announce the bride. (She goes to Moulinet.) We leave in a moment.

Mou.—I go to give the orders

(Claire, in bridal dress with a veil, enters on the arm of her brother, followed by Suzanne, the Marquise and Bachelin.)

Baron.—Where is M. Derblay?

Octave.—He is seeing our friends to their carriage.

Marquise.—(To Claire.) How do you feel, my child?

Claire.—Very well. (She seats herself in the arm-chair, and Suzanne takes off her veil and wreath.)

Mar.—(Going to Bachelin.) Have you attended to my order?

Bachelin.—Yes, madame. I told M. Philippe that, the marriage being ended, you think Madame Derblay should be informed of her real position, of the loss of her fortune and the disinterestedness of her husband. But I must tell you that I have found M. Philippe very much opposed to that revelation. He does not want his young wife, on entering his house, to

believe that she has suffered any loss. He has charged me to ask you to renounce your project.

Mar.—I must say he astonishes me in all circumstances. He has a surprising breadth of view and elevation of character. He is truly an extraordinary man.

Bach.—That is what I had the honor to tell you the first time I spoke of him.

Mar.—Yes. He is a true gentleman. We have had a happy experience. Let us hope my daughter will know as we do how to appreciate her husband! She is very pale, Bachelin!

Duke.—(Approaching Claire.) Claire, kindly tell me that you pardon me.

Cla.—(Looking boldly at the duke.) I have forgotten all. I love my husband.

Duke.—(With a smile.) I wish that in speaking thus you were sincere.

Cla.—Adieu, duke!

Duke.—Au revoir, Claire!

Baron.—Well, duke, are you leaving?

Duke.—(Lightly.) Yes. I have nothing more to do here. It is the husband's turn.

Baron.—Eh! eh! you appear not to be without some bitterness. Seeing Claire married, acknowledge you have some regrets.

Duke.—Regrets? Am I the one to have them?

Baron.—My dear sir, that is an affected answer. But since you believe yourself such a conqueror, have you noticed M. Derblay? Tell me if he looks like a husband who could be robbed of his wife?

Duke.—(Joking.) Pooh! Since Vulcan, the blacksmiths have no chance.

Baron.—(Gravely.) Well, listen to me. Beware of the hammer!

Duke.—(Shrugs his shoulders without answering, and goes to Moulinet.) We will leave when you wish.

Mou.—I will not detain you. What a reception! I thought I would find here all the aristocracy of the province, and not

a cat!—Ah! yes, the notary who sold me my house. It is a mockery.

Athénaïs.—(To Claire.) You have no longer anything to wish for—you are loved, you love. Promise me that you will think of me in your joys and sorrows. There are always some! You know that I will do my part.

Cla.—Be sure that I appreciate your friendship to its full value. But, you see, happiness does not need confidants. I shall be happy without saying it.

Athénaïs.—(Smiling.) Farewell. (Aside.) Indomitable!

Cla.—(Trembling with contained emotion, aside.) They shall not see me cry. (*Athénaïs* gives her arm to her father, and goes out, followed by the duke.)

Mar.—(Coming to Claire.) Come, my dear! I must leave you. My rôle of mother is ended. You are going to be mistress of your life. I have done all that depended on me for your happiness, have I not?

Cla.—Yes, dear mother. Have no care, no anxiety. (In a choked voice.) Do not wait on me. They might think— Go now! Till to-morrow. (She embraces her mother, then the marquise goes out with Octave.) (Aside.) I suffocate!

Suz.—(Drawing near.) My sister, they believe in our province that the flower from a beloved bride's bouquet brings happiness. I love you tenderly. Will you allow me to take one of these flowers?

Cla.—(With bitterness.) If these flowers bring happiness, they are useless to me. Here, take them all. (She snatches the bouquet, gives it to Suzanne, then rises.)

Suz.—(With emotion.) You appear not to care for the flowers, and yet it was my brother who gave them to you.

Bar.—Leave her, my dear. She needs quietness. Don't make trouble, but take your bouquet. It will serve you as a model one of these days.

Suz.—Good-night, madame.

Bar.—Good-night, my dear child. (Suzanne goes out, the baronne closes the door.) Why, what are you thinking of? You have just hurt your poor sister, and for nothing. Let us see what is the matter. Speak to me.

Cla.—(Bursting out.) Don't you see how much I suffer? Don't you understand that I am going mad? In a moment all you who love me will be gone; and I will remain alone in this big, strange house. What can I hold to, whom can I turn to? All that held me to the past is broken, all that should attract me toward the future has vanished.

Bar.—You grieve as if you were completely forsaken. Will you not always have the old affections? And are you not going to have the new, sincere and devoted? Your husband is there: he worships you, have confidence.

Cla.—Ah! if you knew what is passing within me! This marriage which I ordered, in spite of all, with the hastiness of revolted pride, now that it is done, fills me with horror. That man, who is my husband, I would like to flee from. Wait! Don't leave me; stay here. He will not dare to come while you are near me.

Bar.—Good heaven! How you frighten me! Perhaps your mother has not gone yet. Shall I call her?

Cla.—(Quickly.) No! It is she above all that I want to hide from. She must never know my fears nor dream of my despair. All that has been done, I have ordered. I alone should bear the pain. My weaknesses are without excuse. Be quiet! They will not be renewed.

Bar.—But yet—

Cla.—(Firmly.) Go to your husband without further thought, without uneasiness. Kiss me and let all that has escaped from me be forgotten when you cross the threshold of this room. You promise me?

Bar.—I promise. Till to-morrow.

Cla.—Till to-morrow!

Bar.—(Stopping at the door.) Poor Claire! (Exit.)

Cla.—Alas! it is done now! All my illusions have fallen. I see the truth. I am no longer my own—I must live bound to a man who comes armed with his rights and who may say, I wish! to me, till now always free, always obeyed! (With despair.) Ah! would it not be better to disappear? O God! (Stifling, she goes to the window and opens it.) How calm is the shining water! It would be rest, oblivion! (She suddenly

closes the window.) No, that would be a dreadful, degrading scandal. My life given to vulgar curiosity. Anything rather than that! Oh, miserable coward who has betrayed me! More cowardly and more miserable still he who has taken me for wife! (She listens with agony.) Some one comes. It is he!

Philippe.—(Standing at a distance, timid.) Will you allow me to come near you? For the first time we are alone, and I have much in my heart for you. Till now I have not dared to speak. I would have expressed my feelings badly. All my life has been passed in work—so I pray you be indulgent. What I feel, believe me, is much more than what I say. Very often you have seen me come to you, stammer some words, then keep silent. I was afraid of appearing too bold or too timid, and that fear paralyzed me. Then I have confined myself to listening to you, and your voice was sweet as a song to my ear. I lost myself thinking about you, forgetting everything to follow you when you walked on the terrace in the sunlight. You have entered thus deeply in me: I have worshipped you. You have become my only thought, my hope, my life. Thus judge of my intoxication now that I see you there, near me, all mine. (He takes Claire's hand.)

Cla..—(Making a movement to withdraw her hand.) For mercy's sake, sir!

Phil..—(Astonished.) What is the matter? Am I so unfortunate as to displease you with my words?

Cla..—(Softly.) Say nothing just now. You see my trouble is deep.

Phil..—Why, yes; you are pale, trembling. Am I the cause of it?

Cla..—(After a silence, in a low voice.) Yes.

Phil..—Reassure yourself, I pray. Do you not feel that my only wish is not to displease you? What have I done? Demand—all will be easy to me. I love you so!

Cla..—(With a sad smile.) If you love me—then—be kind, and—

Phil..—(Softly.) Why not tell me all your thought? Do you wish me to leave you? Do you want to put that proof on me? I will bear it, if it is your wish.

Cla.—Well, yes; it would please me. The emotions of this day have made me ill. I need quiet. I must collect my thoughts. And I will explain to-morrow, later, when I am more sure of myself.

Phil.—(Affectionately.) Why tell me to-morrow or later what I can hear to-day? Are not my life and yours henceforth inseparable? Our way is marked out. For you, to be confident and sincere; for me, to be devoted and patient. I am ready for it, I assure you. Are you?

Cla.—(With embarrassment.) Let me tell you that confidence is not gained in a moment. I have been married only two hours. My life, alas! dates farther back. That life was happy. I had the right to think aloud, I was free to be silent. I have never been forced to lie. My troubles—and I have had them, you know—were guessed. They understood that the remembrance cannot be blotted out instantly. I have been very much spoiled. I was never asked to smile when I was sad—if I must dissimulate before you, give me time to accustom myself to that restraint.

Phil.—(Quickly.) I pray you, do not add a word. You hurt me! You will never have, believe me, a more tender or more devoted friend than I. In marrying you I have taken my share of your troubles, and I intend to make you forget them. If the past has deceived you, hope for the future. Far from me the thought of imposing my love on you. What I ask is to let me try, by care and love, to win you in spite of yourself. That is my whole ambition. And since you need rest, solitude, remain here, free, reassured as you were yesterday. I retire. That is right, is it not? what you wish? Let it be as you wish! (*Philippe* comes to *Claire* and softly goes to kiss her on the forehead.) Till to-morrow! (Then, breathing the perfume of her hair, he forgets himself and takes her in his arms.) If you knew, though, how I love you!

Cla.—(Repelling him with anger.) Leave me!

Phil.—(Stands a moment, stupefied.) Claire!

Cla.—(With strength, drawing back.) Ah! don't come near me!

Phil.—You repulse me with violence, with horror? What has happened to you? (Getting animated.) That is not the

fright of bashfulness—it is repulsion! Stay; your words of a while ago come to my mind, and now I fear I understand them better. After the deception you have suffered there is only bitterness in your heart. Perhaps there is regret!

Cla.—(In a hollow voice.) Sir— (She tries to leave him.)

Phil.—(Throwing himself before her, stops her with authority.) Oh! listen to me. The time for clear and frank explanations has come. By your attitude you give me suspicions that must be made clear. A woman does not repulse her husband without reasons. To treat me as you have done, there must—

Cla.—(Turning toward Philippe and looking at him haughtily.) There must?—

Phil.—(Looking at her piercingly.) That man who has left you so foolishly—is it possible you still love him? (Claire turns and stands fixed and silent.) You have heard me; answer. You must! (He takes her by the arm and brings her violently forward.) It is my will!

Cla.—(With anger, taking his side.) Well! if it was?

Phil.—(Raising his fists as though to crush Claire.) Unhappy one! (He moves backward with astonishment.) Come! it is not possible! You want to prove me— That's it, is it not? Ah! It is cruel sport, I assure you. (Almost beseeching, hands extended.) But speak, then! Say something! (Tears in his voice.) You are silent? (He seizes her motionless and fierce. With rage:) It is true, then? (He takes some steps at random, then, pressing his hand to his forehead, comes toward her.) So it is with your heart full of love to another that you have married me? And without blushing you have put your hand in mine? To what degree of moral depravity have you fallen, then?

Cla.—(With despair.) Oh! sir, have you not seen that for a fortnight I have been mad? Do you not understand that I struggled in a circle which I cannot leave? I have been drawn into what I have done by an irresistible fatality. I must appear to you a miserable creature. You will never judge me as severely as I judge myself. I deserve your anger and contempt. Stay! take all of mine except myself! My fortune

is yours: I give it to you. Let that be the ransom of my liberty!

Phil.—(Brightly.) Your fortune! You offer to me? To me! (Coldly.) You deceive yourself, madame! You think still to have an affair with the Duc de Bligny.

Cla.—(Starting.) Sir! (She is silent.)

Phil.—(With bitterness.) Well! Why do you stop? Defend him, then! It is the least you can do for him. (With rage.) Ah! I see now. You wanted for your husband a man who was dependent on you—a union with me was a mésalliance, but my gentleness would compensate for the lowness of my origin. If by chance I thought of revolting and demanding my rights, they had wherewith to close my mouth a bag of gold! And I, blind, did not see the snare! Simpleton, I never suspected that spicy intrigue, but came à while ago, trembling, to make here my avowal of love! Was I not worse than insane, worse than a fool? Was I not snarling and ignoble? But at least I have your fortune, is it not so? I am paid: I have not the right to implore help.

(Philippe, bursting into a furious laugh, which ends in sobs, falls on the sofa and buries his head in his hands.)

Cla.—(With astonishment.) Sir!

Phil.—(Weeping.) You have in a moment destroyed my happiness! And I weep, madame, I weep! (He rises.) But that is enough weakness. You wanted to buy your liberty a while ago. I give it to you for nothing. Believe me, I will never trouble you. All bonds between us are broken. However, a public separation would cause a scandal that I do not deserve to undergo, and I pray you to spare me. We will live together, but without each other. But, as I want nothing doubtful between us, listen well to what I am going to say. You will know one day that you have been more unjust than cruel. Perhaps you will think then of retracting what you have done. I declare from now it will be useless. I would see you now crawling at my feet, begging pardon, and I would not have for you a word of pity. Farewell, madame. There is your room, here is mine. From to-day you no longer exist for me.

(Claire bows her head, and, without a word, slowly crosses the room toward her apartment. Philippe follows her anxiously with a look, hoping for a return, a sign of regret. She goes in. The door is closed.)

Phil.—(Alone, with grief.) What! not a word—not a look! Neither repentance nor pity! (With anger.) Ah! proud one, who will not bend, I worship you, but I will break you!

(Curtain.)

ACT III.

A drawing-room in M. Derblay's house, with a bay window opening on the terrace, and furniture in style of Louis XIV. Philippe and Claire, the Baron and the Baronne, the Duke and the Duchess, Suzanne, Octave, Pontac, the Prefect, and the General are listening to Moulinet, who has been congratulating Claire on her birthday.

All.—Bravo, Monsieur Moulinet!

Moulinet.—And I will end, madame, by wishing you, on this festival occasion, the continuation of a happiness which is at once a condemnation for bachelors and a lesson for married people.

Duke.—(Aside.) A hit at me.

Mou.—Welcomed by you with that grace which characterizes you, your house has become for me a choice retreat. (Smiling.) And it is always with renewed pleasure that I bring to you the tribute of my sincere admiration.

All.—(Rising.) Bravo!

Athénaïs.—You have finished, papa? Charming, your little impromptu!

Mou.—(Aside.) I studied it hard enough last night!

Bachelin.—(Coming to Claire.) It is a joy to all your friends, after the anxiety your health gave them, to see you so entirely recovered.

Claire.—I thank you, my dear friend. (She moves toward the terrace.)

Baron.—(To Bachelin.) Ah! my dear Bachelin, here I am, fallen from the clouds. When I arrived yesterday at Beaulieu, I did not expect to breakfast in M. Derblay's house with Bligny, Moulinet and company. They are received, then?

Bach.—Yes, monsieur le baron, there are worldly exigencies from which there is no escape. At the time of the marriage good feeling was maintained in appearance. Returned to Varenne after the winter, M. Moulinet presented himself here; the door was not shut on him.

Baron.—And in his train the duchess and duke have slipped into the house.

Bach.—That's it.

Baron.—Do they come often?

Bach.—Too often.

Baron.—Ah! you have noticed?—

Bach.—I! Oh, nothing! I see poorly even with my glasses. (Athénaïs laughs loudly.) But the duchess is very gay—she turns everybody inside out—and I am an old fogey! I don't like to change my habits.

Baron.—From that I prophesy no good!

Mou.—A delightful reunion! What a change here in six months! All are gay, smiling: joy is felt in this house.

Baron.—And you are radiant, Monsieur Moulinet.

Mou.—That's true, monsieur le baron; this luxury, these festivities delight me. I am in my true element—I was born for high life. My tastes protest against the injustice of my origin.

Baron.—Your good taste and friendly spirit have made that forgotten for a long time. (He joins Suzanne, and goes with her on the terrace.)

Mou.—(To Bachelin.) What a fine man the baron is! That's the kind of son-in-law I like.

Duke.—(Low, to Claire.) Claire, why are you so sad? This ought to be a happy day for you.

Cla.—I am not sad. Besides, what does it matter to you?

Duke.—Nothing that affects you is indifferent to me.

(Claire looks at him a moment, and moves off without answering.)

Mou.—(Coming to the duke.) Monsieur the duke, a word, I pray. M. Derblay has considerable influence, and I expected to derive some advantage from it. But I learn with shame that you are abusing the relations that I was able to renew with him, and are paying attentions to his wife.

Duke.—Did your daughter do me the favor of complaining?

Mou.—My faith, no. Your house is going to the bad. I think that deplorable, but it seems that it is endured, and Athénaïs appears to trouble herself very little about your fidelity.

Duke.—Well, then?

Mou.—Eh? It is I who complain. M. Derblay will become aware of your schemes—you will have a quarrel with him—and he will kill you like a simple-clown!

Duke.—(Laughing.) And with the same stroke your fine plans. Ho! ho! The pot of milk over again! Good-by cow, pig, chickens!

Mou.—Monsieur the duke!

Duke.—(Still laughing.) There, quiet yourself! My attentions to Madame Derblay—simple gallantry, of no consequence. Sleep in peace, Monsieur Moulinet! You will be dep-
uty. Only don't try to become minister.

Mou.—Why not?

Duke.—You will bring me into difficulties.

Mou.—Oh, no! it will be all right.

Ath.—(To Philippe, coming down on his arm.) You have your own way of explaining things. (Claire follows them with a troubled look.)

Baronne.—(To Claire.) What is the matter with you?

Cla.—Nothing.

Bar.—(Aside.) There is something!

Suzanne.—(Comes in running.) Philippe!

Philippe.—What is it, my child?

Suz.—A deputation of workmen. There are three. They ask permission to come in.

Prefect.—A little popular demonstration—that's fine!

Baron.—He is going to ask them to sing the Marseillaise.

(Gobert comes in, carrying an enormous bouquet. Two other workmen follow.)

Phil.—It is you, Gobert? Come in, my man, and you also, my friends. (Gobert stands still, very much embarrassed.)

The Workmen.—(Pushing him.) Go on; you ought to speak.

Gobert.—(With effort.) Since the master permits it, Madame Derblay, deign to accept this bouquet that I am charged to offer to you in the name of my comrades, wishing you a happy birthday. You must know that at Pont-Avesnes there are two thousand of us who owe what we have to your husband. And, you see, we are grateful to you for the happiness you give him.

Cla.—(In a low voice.) Happiness!

All present.—Hurrah! Bravo!

Go.—(More boldly.) But I have something else to say. The district is going to elect a deputy.

Mou.—A deputy!

Go.—And we come to ask the master to accept the nomination.

Pre.—(Emphatically.) Very good! These good people are right. M. Derblay is one of us. For all, his name means science, honesty, work and liberty!

Mou.—(Aside.) There! my plans are spoiled!

Phil.—(To the workmen.) My good Gobert, you must thank your comrades for me, but tell them that I do not accept the honor that they wish to do me.

Mou.—(With astonishment.) He refuses? A certain election! That is something new.

Phil.—I wish to remain in your midst; there I will find the best and most frequent occasion of being useful to you.

Gobert and the Workmen.—Long live the master! (Cheers outside.)

Phil.—Besides, we will choose together a candidate who will be able to represent us worthily.

Mou.—(Aside.) He is thinking of me, that's certain! Fine man! (To Bachelin.) That is a son-in-law after my own heart!

Bach.—(Laughing.) All except his own. (Moulinet shakes hands with Philippe, and returns to his place.)

Cla.—As for me, my friends, I thank you with all my heart for your kind thought. And you, Gobert, since you are the oldest of the employés, for all your comrades come and kiss me.

Go.—(Delighted.) Oh, madame! The Derblays have always been kind people; and you are worthy to be of the family. (He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, and kisses Claire, then shouts:) Long live the mistress!

Phil.—Madame Derblay has just said very delicately all I think. My friends, to-day the park belongs to you. There are sports, a ball and something to drink our health. Go and amuse yourselves! That will be the right way of thanking me. (Cheers outside. The workmen go out, and Philippe follows.)

Suz.—(To Philippe.) Oh, let us go to the park!

Ath.—(To Philippe.) I reclaim your arm, Monsieur Derblay. (To Claire.) You come, too, won't you?

Cla.—(Gloomily.) Philippe will be enough for you.

Ath.—(Smiling.) Are you cross because I take your husband? Would you be a little jealous?

Cla.—(With rage.) Jealous? I? No, I am a little tired; that is all. (Seeing Philippe ready to leave.) Philippe!

Phil.—(Returning to Claire.) What is the matter? Are you suffering? Do you want anything?

Cla.—(With clenched teeth.) No, there is nothing the matter; I want nothing. Go! (He departs, and she sinks into a chair.)

Bar.—(Coming to Claire.) What does all this mean? The duke moves gallantly around you, your husband is busy attending to Athénais. Have you such confidence in the Duchess Moulinet?

Cla.—I have faith in my husband.

Bar.—Oh, you know husbands! Afterward they are sorry, but it is done, all the same!

Cla.—Why do you say that to me?

Bar.—Because—— (With resolution.) Because you are not frank; because you have secrets from me; because you suffer, and that troubles me.

Cla.—(With nervous gayety.) I! Why should I suffer? I live in the midst of luxury, of bustle and animation. I have a family that worship me, friends that flock around me, a husband who leaves me my liberty. You know that was my dream. How should I suffer?

Bar.—Well! what was your dream formerly is your despair to-day. Your husband leaves you your liberty, but he has taken his own again, and when you see him near another woman—— No, you are not happy!

Cla.—(Brightly.) Well, yes, it is true, I am unhappy! It is justice.

Bar.—(Stupefied.) But your husband——

Cla.—No! don't accuse him! He is the most generous of men. I alone am to blame!

Bar.—What is it, then?

Cla.—There is—— You remember the night of my marriage? You were the last to leave me. After you, my husband came. And that man who worshipped me—you understand that? I spurned him—drove him away!

Bar.—Claire!

Cla.—Treated so harshly, his anger was terrible. I thought I could rule him. Suddenly he was transformed in my eyes. He seemed to grow with all his pride and all his disdain. I caught a glimpse, then, of what kind of a man he was in reality. I had a gleam of reason. But too late! He himself broke forever the bonds which united us.

Bar.—But the next day?

Cla.—The next day—I fell ill, and should have died! If you knew what he was then! (With rapture.) For a month, day and night, he contended for me with death. And if I am still living, I owe it to him. I don't know what took place within me then. I am not the same. I came back to life with

other feelings, with other thoughts. Was it gratitude for his care, or admiration for his character? I was drawn toward him. When he was not there, involuntarily I looked for him. When he was near me, I did not look at him, and yet I saw him. He was so grave, so sad, that I dared not speak to him. Oh, if he had said a word to me—if he had only stretched out his hand! I felt so toward him that I would have fallen in his arms.

Bar.—You love him?

Cla.—Yes.

Bar.—That was fate! A woman really only loves the man who has made himself her master. The more Philippe showed himself energetic and proud, the more surely you have been conquered.

Cla.—Yes! And I must endure all the consequences of my overthrow—endure the presence of that Athénaïs, who throws herself boldly at my husband's head—unable to draw him from her, having no right to defend myself. Oh, but let her take care! If she goes too far, I will do something mad that will ruin one of us.

Bar.—No, no; nothing mad, but wise and skillful! You have done a wrong; you must set it right.

Cla.—And how?

Bar.—Have you never thought of going to your husband and trying to retie the broken bonds?

Cla.—I have not dared. Think! living side by side, we are more separated than two strangers. Go to him after having repulsed him?

Bar.—Still, it must be done. Such a man as your husband loves only once, and for life. But he is a man of will, and you will disarm him only by humbling yourself before him.

Cla.—(With a spring.) Oh, I am ready! But what if he looks on my return as a new caprice?

Bar.—You must wait for a favorable opportunity. If one does not come, we must make one. And, to make a start, I am going to put myself between our dear duchess Moulinet and your husband— There, look at the baron, picking up pebbles like little Poucet. There is a trained husband. Baron, your arm!

Baron.—(Coming near.) At your service, my dear.

Bar.—(Tenderly.) Baron, you are an angel! And, what is more, a wise angel.

Baron.—Oh! That's too much!

Bar.—Kiss my hand.

Baron.—With pleasure.

Bar.—(To Claire.) I'll begin at once. (The baron goes out talking to his wife.)

Cla.—(Alone.) Oh, yes; I will humble myself! That will be easy and sweet. But he? Will he consent to forgive me? When one has loved as he loved, can he forget?

(The Duke comes quietly to Claire.)

Duke.—When one has loved deeply, one never forgets. (Claire turns quickly.)

Cla.—Whom are you looking for here?

Duke.—You! (Claire goes toward the terrace; the duke stops her.) Oh! stay, I pray. For two weeks you have tried to evade me.

Cla.—(With disdain.) I? (She comes back as if to brave him.)

Duke.—It is the first time that I can freely speak to you.

Cla.—We have nothing to say to each other.

Duke.—(Very softly.) Why do you try to deceive me? Do you hope to hide your trouble?

Cla.—(Coldly.) I have no trouble.

Duke.—I would be happy if I could believe you. But while listening to me— Stay! even at this moment you have tears in your eyes. Pardon my words, but since this morning you have been nervous—uneasy. A while ago you could hardly overcome your trouble, and you have not ceased watching your husband—

Cla.—Well?

Duke.—Well! M. Derblay was devoted to the duchess, and you appear to suffer. So I have concluded that the good feeling that you pretend exists between you is not real, and that he

does not appreciate at its value the treasure that chance, or rather my bad luck, has given him. Then a thousand little things, formerly neglected, have come to my mind, and I am certain that you have not, whatever you may say, all the happiness that you deserve.

Cla.—(Forcibly.) If that were true, you would be the only one who would have no right to acknowledge it to yourself or to tell it to me!

Duke.—(Passionately.) Claire! Do you believe, then, that one can always govern his reason and his will? Both advised me to remain far from you. I ought to, for your sake. I resolved to, and I have done everything to forget you. But this country, where you live, draws me in spite of myself. It was said you were happy, and I rejoiced. I hoped that I would see you again without danger. If happy, I would have worshipped you from afar, without a word, without a look which could disturb your happiness. But you were suffering! Then I was no longer master of myself, and I understood that there would never be another woman in the world for me but you!

Cla.—Really? I admire your impudence! Having had formerly to choose between a woman whom you say you loved, and a fortune which tempted you, you did not hesitate: you closed your heart and opened your cash box. To-day, since you have the money, you would not be sorry to have the woman. You are too ambitious, duke. You cannot have all!

Duke.—You know very well that I was unfortunate rather than blameworthy. Yes, one day I had to choose between my honor and my love: I had to sacrifice one to the other. But I have suffered enough for it, and you can no longer wish me to suffer.

Cla.—Wish you to suffer? You flatter yourself! If I had for you any feeling whatever, it would be that of gratitude. For at last, if I am the wife of M. Derblay, who is as useful as you are worthless, as devoted as you are selfish, who has all the qualities that you have not, and none of the faults that you have, don't I owe it to you?

Duke.—(With restrained anger.) M. Derblay is, no doubt, perfect; but he has a flaw which renders his perfection useless—for you, at least. He does not love you!

la.—Duke!

Duke.—He ought to be near you, attentive and tender.
Where is he? With the duchess!

Cla.—What you say is scandalous!

Duke.—It is only true! He scorns you.

Cla.—Ah! We must stop! I will not listen longer to you.
You have built hopes on my loneliness that will not be realized,
I assure you. I may be a woman to pity; I would never be a
woman to comfort.

Duke.—(Coming toward her.) Claire!

Cla.—Begone! (She draws back, threatening.) One word
more, I will call!

Duke.—(Bowing.) I obey you: I withdraw. But you will
change. I am patient. I shall wait. (Exit.)

Cla.—(Alone, in despair.) Am I to be insulted thus? That
is the result of my madness! Happiness lost! Honor threat-
ened! (She sinks down.)

Marquise.—(Entering by the back.) Ah! good-day, my
dear.

Cla.—(Joyfully, going to her.) My mother!

Mar.—Are you all alone?

Cla.—(With embarrassment.) The baronne left me a mo-
ment ago. Philippe is in the park with our guests. Why did
you not come sooner? You have not been ill?

Mar.—No. I was detained later than I thought by my little
orphans. (Smiling.) I must be busy, now that I no longer
have you near me. In place of one daughter, I have sixty chil-
dren to feed, clothe and teach. But I get help! Do you know
what Philippe has done? He sent me yesterday, in your name
and in honor of your birthday, ten thousand francs. Ah! love
your husband well; he is the best of men!

Cla.—(Gloomily.) Yes, mother.

Mar.—(Turning, sees Philippe.) Here he is—

Phil.—(Coming forward.) Marquise! I was just told you
had come. (He kisses her hand.)

Mar.—Thanks, my dear child, for my orphans.

Phil.—It is your daughter you must thank, marquise. I am only the hand that executes—she is the heart that commands.

Mar.—(Leading him aside.) Now, here is what you told me to bring from Paris. Here, give it yourself. (She gives him a jewel box.)

Phil.—(To Claire.) Claire, here is my gift. (Claire rises with a movement of joy, and takes the box from him.) Being chosen by your mother, I think it will please you. (Claire is discouraged at these words, and does not open the box.)

Mar.—Why don't you look at it? My dear, it is a princely gift. (Claire opens the box.) Go, Philippe, fasten it yourself, that sign of slavery. (Philippe goes to trembling Claire, takes the collar, puts it round her neck, and fastens it; the marquise takes the box, puts it on the table, and returns.) Well! now kiss your husband! Am I hindering you? There! I won't look. (The marquise turns round gayly; Claire leans her head against Philippe, who, as moved as herself, kisses her hair.) All right! (To Philippe.) Well! what next? (She goes up, with him, toward Octave and Suzanne, who come in.)

Cla.—(Sadly.) Sad kiss, that does not come from the heart, and that the lips alone have given!

Suz.—(To Octave.) Come! you must tell her. (They come to Claire.)

Octave.—(To Claire.) Claire, I have great news to announce: Suzanne and I love each other.

Cla.—(Joyfully.) Oh, my dear children!

Suz.—We wanted to tell you first, and we place our happiness in your hands.

Oct.—Speak to Philippe for me; induce him to give me Suzanne.

Cla.—(Troubled.) I!

Oct.—You are very willing, are you not, to undertake my cause?

Cla.—(With sudden decision.) Yes; and I am going to plead it for the moment as if it were my own.

Oct.—Thank you!

Cla.—Ask Philippe to come. (Suzanne and Octave run to find Philippe.) (Aside.) I am saved! There is the opportunity

that I was wishing for. The tenderness that he has for his sister may bring him back to me! (Octave, the marquise and Suzanne go out.)

Phil.—(Comes to Claire, very grave.) You have something to ask me? I am listening.

Cla.—We live so separated from each other that it is necessary indeed for me to have something to ask you in order to risk detaining you.

Phil.—What is the matter?

Cla.—First, tell me, do you take any interest in Octave?

Phil.—I do not think that your brother has had, till now, reason to doubt it.

Cla.—If you had an opportunity to prove this interest to him—

Phil.—I would certainly seize it.

Cla.—Well, the opportunity has come. I ought to warn you it is serious.

Phil.—Come to the point! Does what you want seem to you so difficult to obtain?

Cla.—Judge for yourself! Octave loves your sister, and has commissioned me to ask her from you for him.

Phil.—(Repressing a movement.) Ah! (He stands absorbed.)

Cla.—(Uneasily.) Have you no answer?

Phil.—(Very grave.) I am grieved for your brother, but this marriage is impossible.

Cla.—(With sorrow.) You refuse?

Phil.—I refuse.

Cla.—Why?

Phil.—Because this new bond would attach me more closely to your family, and after what has happened between us, I do not wish it.

Cla.—(Quickly.) Take care lest you make Suzanne unhappy by refusing her to Octave! She loves him.

Phil.—She is only sixteen. She is at the happy age when feelings can change without leaving in the heart deep and painful traces. She will forget.

Cla.—And if you are mistaken? If she is not going to forget, but to suffer?

Phil.—(Strongly.) Then I would have only a single word to tell her to turn her forever from you and yours.

Cla.—(With agony.) It is revenge that you are seeking?

Phil.—(Haughtily.) Revenge! Do you believe that I should care to accept one?

Cla.—(Supplicating.) Oh, Philippe! Be generous! I am overwhelmed enough—what must I do to move you? I have done you serious wrong. I know it—

Phil.—(Laughing bitterly.) Really? You have done me serious wrong. And you deign to acknowledge it? It seems to me this is a great concession that you are making to me.

Cla.—I have done you much wrong, but you make me atone for it hardly.

Phil.—I? And how? Have I ever reproached you? Have I said an offensive word to you? Have I been lacking in respect toward you?

Cla.—(With grief.) No! But how much would I have preferred your anger to that haughty indifference with which you treat me! Around me I hear everybody praise my good fortune. Everywhere I go I am envied, fêted. I return to our house. Where is my happiness? I look for it, and find only solitude and desertion.

Phil.—I am not responsible for that. You have yourself determined your life. It is such as you made it.

Cla.—That is true. But at least I was in the right to count on rest, and I did not even get that—you have allowed the duke and duchess to come back to your home.

Phil.—They are your relations. Was it my place to shut our door on them? I endure them. What are you complaining about?

Cla.—(With growing violence.) Oh! Don't pretend you do not understand! You know if the duchess is here it is because she hates me. Her aim is plainly seen—she makes a show of you, she compromises you (movement from Philippe)—without your giving way to her, I admit—but her bravadoes,

which emphasize your indifference for me, are noticed—they hurt me. In short, take care! I shall not bear them much longer!

Phil.—(With bitterness.) How like you that is! How you still remain the same! Always violence and pride! It was to cut a good figure in the eyes of the world that you threw yourself, like a fool, in the adventure of our marriage. And to-day still, at the thought that you will be criticised, you lose all moderation and forget yourself so far as to threaten me.

Cla.—(Despairing.) No! I do not threaten: I implore. Have pity on me, Philippe; do not make me responsible for the unhappiness of these two children! There they are, smiling, full of affection and hope, and by my fault they are going to weep. Oh! do not wait for me to cause them such grief! I would not be bold enough for that. And your refusal— (Octave appears on the terrace.) Ah! Octave! Come! (To Philippe.) Here, sir, inform him yourself.

Phil.—(With anger.) Madame—

Oct.—(Looking at them.) What is the matter? How agitated you are! How troubled! Did you tell Philippe? Is it that?

Phil.—(Grave.) Octave, you must give up your plan.

Oct.—(With astonishment.) Give up! But why?

Phil.—I beg you, ask me nothing.

Oct.—What! Without explanation? You, Philippe, whom I love so much, you cause me such grief? Claire, at least speak you! Tell me, what is the reason? Have I displeased him, unknowingly? What has changed him since you have been his wife?

Cla.—(With agony.) Octave—

Oct.—(Struck with an idea.) Ah! Money! Is it because I have no fortune? (To Philippe.) But you showed me how to get rich; I will do like you—work!

Cla.—(Troubled). What is that you said? Without fortune—you?

Oct.—(Perceiving his imprudence.) Claire!

Cla.—(With increasing agitation.) What did you mean?

Phil.—(Wishing to prevent him from speaking.) Octave, I forbid you.

Cla.—(Drawing her brother to her.) Allow him, sir. He must speak!

Oct.—Forgive me. I have just betrayed a secret that I swore to keep. You did not know of the loss of our lawsuit. You should always have been ignorant of it.

Cla.—I remember, that lost suit, we were told it meant ruin? You without fortune—myself without a dowry—— But then, when I was married——

Oct.—The disaster had fallen on us.

Cla.—(Fearing to understand.) And—my husband—Philippe?

Oct.—He knew.

Cla.—(With despair.) He knew! And I—I—— Oh, then what a wretch I am!

Oct.—Claire!

Cla.—Yes! It was on account of me, do you hear? that he refuses you his sister—on account of me, unfortunate creature, who causes unhappiness to all who come near me! (She sobs.)

Oct.—Claire, I do not know what happened. But since you accuse yourself, all can be made right. Philippe is kind; he will forgive you.

Cla.—(With distraction.) No! He said it: never! And I understand him now!

Oct.—(Pleading.) Philippe!

Phil.—(Grave.) Octave, it is not I who provoked this explanation. I would have wished that it had not taken place, especially before me. Anyhow, it does not alter my resolution. Your sister knew in advance that she had nothing to ask from me, and that I had nothing to grant her. (Acclamations behind the scenes: Long live the master!)

Oct.—(Placing himself before his sister.) Claire, they are coming.

(Athénaïs, Moulinet, the Baron and Baronne appear on the terrace.)

Athénaïs.—There are the peasants and the workmen, who are learning to dance. Monsieur Derblay, I look for you.

Cla.—(With anger.) Ah! always she!

Ath.—(To Philippe.) Will you open this country ball with me? It will be charming. Come!

Cla.—(Placing herself between them. To Athénais:) Forgive me if I disturb your plans; but I would like to speak a moment with you.

Ath.—(Joking.) As to that—immediately?

Cla.—(Firmly.) Immediately.

Ath.—(To Philippe.) Excuse me. I come. (Philippe withdraws, after looking at the two women uneasily.)

Ath.—What is the matter, my dear?

Cla.—A while ago, when you led my husband away, you asked if it displeased me—if I was not a little jealous.

Ath.—I was joking.

Cla.—You were wrong, for what you said was true.

Ath.—You jealous?

Cla.—Yes.

Ath.—Of me?

Cla.—Of you. You see I am frank. It seems to me that my husband is with you more than is right, and I ask you to put an end to that attention which is very painful to me.

Ath.—(Sweetly.) Ah! my little dear! What! You were suffering and said nothing? But are you not exaggerating a little? I really do not recall anything that could have been the cause of your annoyance. M. Derblay is very friendly with me, but that sympathy between members of the same family is not surprising nor criminal.

Cla.—I suffer from it.

Ath.—(Dryly.) My dear friend, you must ask your husband to cure your unhappiness. For my part, I can do nothing.

Cla.—Yes, you can cut short that intimacy.

Ath.—How? By treating your husband badly? First, that would impose a very disagreeable rôle on me, and then do you think it would be very effectual?

Cla.—But that is not what I want to propose to you.

Ath.—What is it, then?

Cla.—It is to go away for a long time from our house.

Ath.—Are you wishing for that?

Cla.—Yes. It is as a prayer that I ask it. Accuse me of being foolish, but do that. There is my happiness.

Ath.—And under what pretext shall I go away? What would be said of a departure so sudden that it would seem to be a rupture?

Cla.—We would undertake to explain it satisfactorily.

Ath.—We may not succeed in it, and it would be disastrous for me. You were frank; I am going to be. I am new in the world to which the duke of Bligny has introduced me, I am delighted with it, and I try to keep the place I have been able to gain. But people are very critical. So, you see, if my husband's family look coldly on me, there will be an opportunity to discuss me. I am so jealous! And then, farewell to my dreams! If you have your love, I have my ambition. I understand that you try to protect the one; allow me to defend the other.

Cla.—So you refuse?

Ath.—Very unwillingly. But put yourself in my place.

Cla.—(With violence.) Put myself in your place? It is you who have put yourself in mine, and who wish to stay in it still! Ever since I knew you you have followed me with your envy and hatred. Before your marriage you took my fiancé from me; since your marriage you try to take my husband! I did not know how to keep the one; I will know how to tear the other away from you.

Ath.—(With rage.) Ah! that's true. Well! yes, since my childhood I have paid you in hatred for all the disdain that you and those like you lavished on me. You overwhelmed me for ten years with your name and your fortune! Well! See—to-day I have millions, I am a duchess, and you—

Cla.—Take care! I am not of a race to allow myself very long to be insulted with impunity.

Ath.—And I bear a name which puts me above your anger.

Cla.—I shall make known the way you have acted toward me—

Ath.—To whom?

Cla.—To the world.

Ath.—Which? Yours, to which I have risen? or mine, to which you have descended?

Cla.—To that one, whichever it be, where there are honorable people to whom respect for others is a duty and to make one's self respected is a right. Before that world—do you hear?—I will repeat aloud what I have just said to you. I will show you such as you are, and we shall see if the name which you bear, however great it be, will be enough to hide your baseness and falseness!

Ath.—You are looking for a scandal?

Cla.—It is an execution that I am going to make. A last time, will you consent to what I ask?

Ath.—(With rage!) No! A hundred times, no!

Cla.—Then you will see!

Enter the Duke, Baron, Baronne, Moulinet, Philippe.

Cla.—(In an outburst.) Duke, take away your wife, if you do not want me to drive her off before everybody!

Moulinet.—(Running, frightened.) Drive off my daughter? The duchess—my daughter!

Ath.—(To the duke.) Sir, will you allow me to be insulted thus without defending me? (Philippe, grave, appears at Claire's side.)

Duke.—(Coldly, to Philippe.) You heard, sir, what Madame Derblay has just said? Do you accept the responsibility of it? Or are you ready to excuse yourself?

Philippe.—(Whom Claire watches with anguish, comes forward unmoved.) Monsieur the duke, whatever Madame Derblay may do, I hold well done.

Duke.—(Bowing and smiling.) It is understood.

Cla.—(Going toward Philippe with enthusiasm.) Oh! thank you, Philippe!

Phil.—(Stopping her with a gesture.) You owe me no thanks. In defending you, I was defending my honor.

(Curtain.)

ACT IV.

First tableau: Philippe's workroom at Pont-Avesnes. Philippe is writing by the light of a lamp.

Suzanne.—(Entering.) Good-morning, brother!

Philippe.—Already up, Suzanne?

Suz.—Already—it is eight o'clock! And you, wretch, have spent the night in work!

Phil.—I had very important accounts to fix—

Suz.—Well, you should take a day longer, and not sit up.

Phil.—It was impossible. (He rises.) Where are you going this morning?

Suz.—I am going to make a round of visits. It's my day for the poor—

Phil.—Here—you shall give them my alms with yours. (He gives her a check.)

Suz.—(Kissing him on one cheek.) Thanks for them. (Kissing him on the other.) Thanks for myself.

Phil.—Listen a moment before going. Claire told me yesterday a little of your plans and hopes—

Suz.—(Confused.) Philippe—

Phil.—(Very tenderly.) Why did you not speak to me first? Are you afraid of me now?

Suz.—No, but those confessions seem easier to make to a sister than to a brother.

Phil.—(Aside.) To a sister! (Aloud.) You love Claire very much?

Suz.—Oh! tenderly.

Phil.—And Octave? How long did you love him?

Suz.—I believe, Philippe, that I loved him since the first day I saw him. He pleased me immediately. He was always saying so much good of you! And that touches my heart. Now he seems to take pleasure only in my company, and I, for my part, am happy when he is there.

Phil.—(With emotion.) Well, my child, you know that my

only aim has been to make you happy. Your happiness is there. You shall wed the one you love.

Suz.—Oh, Philippe! How shall I thank you?

Phil.—In a very simple way, my dear. When you are out, you will pass the church. Go in—and say a little prayer for me—I will be paid.

Suz.—With all my heart. Farewell.

Phil.—(Calling her back and stretching out his arms.) Suzanne! (Suzanne kisses him and goes out.)

Phil.—(Watching her.) Farewell, dear child, who have been the joy of my life.

Servant.—(Entering.) M. Bachelin asks if the master can receive him.

Phil.—Certainly. Show him in.

(Exit servant.)

Enter Bachelin.

Bachelin.—Well, anything new since yesterday?

Phil.—In the evening the conditions of the meeting were settled.

Bach.—When is the fight?

Phil.—This morning at ten o'clock, at the crossroads of Etangs, with pistol, firing while walking.

Bach.—It is serious, but the right is on your side! And, you see, my dear child, I am perhaps an old fool, but I still believe that all does not go by chance in this world, and that there is a Providence. We shall see each other to-morrow, Philippe.

Phil.—I hope so. But it is always necessary to provide for misfortune. Have you examined the papers I gave you?

Bach.—Yes. All is perfectly in order.

Phil.—I thank you. Take this letter; it contains my will. I divide what I possess between my sister and my wife. I want those that bear my name to be entirely independent. Now—and here it is to your old friendship that I speak—I burden you with a mission for Claire which will be very painful, but you alone can fulfill it—you, in whose sight I have lived from infancy, to whom I confessed all yesterday, and who know

what I suffered. You will go to my wife and tell her how much I loved her, how much I wished her to be happy. Show me such as you knew me, and such as she did not want to know—confident and tender. In fine, do not allow her to keep a bad remembrance of me.

Bach.—Oh, my friend! Why not go this moment and find her yourself?

Phil.—(Firmly.) You forget that all advance that I would make would seem base. Ah! do not think me hard-hearted! I am not; but when face to face with her, I can keep up only by pride, is it the time to make a failure?

Bach.—But she is conquered, crushed——

Phil.—You are mistaken. She still struggles. And stay! even this night I had a proof of it. I was there at that table. I was watching, and in the silence of the sleeping house I heard above me a noise of unceasing hurried steps—that unhappy woman's. I saw her, in my thought, walking around the room which should have been ours—— What shall I tell you? I had a moment of weakness; I was seized with a violent desire to find that woman again whom I worship and who is not mine. I said to myself that I was foolish to risk dying without having taken her in my arms. I was no longer master of myself; all my being rushed toward her, and I was about to forget all, when I heard her open her door, cross the drawing-room, and come down! She was coming! I waited, trembling. She stopped there. Only the wood of that door separated us. I was on the point of rushing, opening the door, crying to her, "Come! you know that I worship you!" But with anguish I heard the sound of her steps going away, ascending and dying away. Thus she holds back always! And I had been yielding! Oh, it was well ended! And I made this supreme resolution, playing the part bravely: If I die, to leave her a great and proud remembrance of me; if I survive, to lead her to the end to the conquest of happiness!

Bach.—(Grave.) My friend, the violences that have led to such serious complications are the last revolts of that fatal pride about to disappear. Oh! you must come back safe and sound from this meeting, for the shot that would strike would not kill you only, I am sure.

Phil.—Do not be alarmed. I shall defend myself. (Voices outside.)

Bach.—I leave. (Much moved.) Come—keep cool—my brave child! (He takes him quickly and kisses him.) Au revoir!

Enter Octave and the Baron.

Phil.—You are early, are you not? Have we time?

Baron.—It is only nine o'clock. We have been here some minutes. We left Beaulieu on foot, as if for a walk, in order to avoid questions. My wife will join us again. She will keep company with Madame Derblay.

Phil.—Thanks, my dear baron. You have always shown me friendship, and I am very grateful for it. As for you, Octave, I have a debt to discharge to you, and I do it with great pleasure. I held you responsible for injuries which were not yours. I have been unjust, and I blame myself for it.

Baron.—Well, my friend!

Octave.—(Much moved.) Philippe, I have learned what has happened between Claire and you. I know well my sister has been to blame, and I pity you for having to bear such troubles as much as I admire you for knowing how to hide them. You were right. We have nothing to expect from you, and it is I who ask pardon for having dared to ask your sister from you—

Phil.—No, my friend. And (looking at the baron) I want it well known, in the grave circumstances in which I am, that I am happy to have her loved by an honorable man like you. I want to make amends for my momentary injustice, and I bequeath Suzanne to you as the most precious thing I have in the world.

Oct.—Philippe! (Philippe gives him his hands; he presses them with rapture and begins to weep.) Oh, Philippe!

Baron.—Brave heart!

Phil.—(Conquering his emotion.) Come, marquis, a little more firmness! I hope that you will receive my sister from my hand. But if I am no longer here, my friend, when you marry her, love her well; she deserves it. Hers is a tender heart that the least deception would break.

Oct.—(With an outburst.) Ah! a whole existence of devotion and tenderness in exchange for the happiness you give me! But Philippe, since you are so good, so generous, be not so by halves—

Baron.—Have pity on that poor woman, crushed and desperate. Oh, truly!

Oct.—Think—that may never see you again! I have just spoken to her: she is waiting for me.

Baron.—She is there. She is weeping.

Oct.—Oh, mercy! Make some allowance! Do not repulse her! Do not, I pray you!

Phil.—(Gloomily.) I wanted to avoid an interview which would be only very painful for your sister and me. You both wish it—I consent. (To the baron.) But do something to shorten it—and help my departure by coming for me.

Baron.—I promise.

Oct.—Oh! thanks.

(Claire comes forward, supported by the baronne. Octave and the baron take their hats and leave. The baronne follows them. Claire and Philippe stand a moment face to face, silent. Claire tries to speak. She cannot, and, seizing Philippe's hand, she bursts into sobs.)

Cla.—Oh, Philippe!

Phil.—(Much troubled.) Claire—you trouble me deeply. I need all my courage. I pray you calm yourself—spare me, if you regard my life!

Cla.—Your life! Ah! Sooner a hundred times would I give mine! It is I, unhappy one, who by my rage have thrown you into danger! Should I not bear it all? In suffering I expiate my wrongs toward you, and in a moment of rage I forgot—all! Oh! you must hate me—for I have done you nothing but evil.

Phil.—(Very softly.) No! I do not hate you. There was at the beginning of our common life a misunderstanding which has cost us both much pain. You are not alone responsible. I was at fault. I was not able to understand you. I did not know how to entirely sacrifice myself. I loved you too much! I suffered much! But I do not want to leave you with the thought

that I have any ill feeling toward you. Give me your hand as I do, and let us say farewell.

Cla.—Farewell! But no! why? (With strength.) You shall not fight! I will prevent it!

Phil.—How?

Cla.—By sacrificing my pride to your safety! Oh! nothing will stop me, since it concerns you! I will humble myself before the duchess! If necessary, I will go find the duke—

Phil.—I forbid it! You bear my name: do not forget it! Any humiliation that would affect you would affect me. And then, finally, understand that I execrate him—this man who has caused my unhappiness! And be sure that the moment that puts me face to face with him has been eagerly waited for for a long time!

Cla.—(With anguish.) Philippe!

Phil.—It is not for nothing, see, that I suffered his presence in my house. I wish to have him within my reach. I know of what he is capable, and it was necessary for my complete justification in your eyes that to the outrage of his desertion he should add the outrage of his new love!

Cla.—(With disgust.) Ah!

Phil.—But I knew you also. I was sure that it would be even by you, in an hour of supreme revolt, that this man would be delivered to me. You have done what I expected. Now the rest concerns me only.

Cla.—(Clinging to him.) Oh! but that is impossible! Philippe, it is folly! I shall not leave you!

Phil.—Leave me!

Cla.—(With despair.) But I do not want him to kill you! Ah! Philippe, only a moment! Listen to me—look at me! You will not understand anything? But do you not see I worship you? Have you not guessed it for a long time, by the trouble of my voice, by the wildness of my eyes?

Phil.—(Trying to push her away.) Claire!

Cla.—(With her head on his shoulder.) Oh! You will prevent me from speaking! If you knew how I love you! Stay here near me, all mine! We are so young, we have so much

time to be happy! (Philippe makes a movement to escape from her.) Do not go away! What do you care for this man and woman whom we detest? We will forget them. Let us go away, won't you, far from them? There that will be love, happiness and life!

Phil.—(Disengaging her from him.) Here is duty and honor!

Cla.—No! no! (Baron appears at the back.)

Phil.—Silence!

Cla.—Ah! it is over. I am lost!

Baron.—(To Philippe.) It is time. (He goes out.)

Phil.—(To Claire, softly.) Adieu!

Cla.—(Pleading, coming to him.) Ah! Do not leave me so! Not with that cold word! Tell me that you love me! Do not go without saying it!

Phil.—Pray God that I live! (He goes out.)

Cla.—(With despair.) Oh! (She falls; then, in a moment, gathering her strength, looks for Philippe, sees him no longer, and, tottering, goes to the window.) There he goes. He reaches the park—at the turn of the path he disappears! My God! if I am going to see him no more! No! no! It is impossible! But why did I let him go? I was foolish! I must join him—follow him! That miserable duke will kill him for me! Oh, no! I will save him! (Exit.)

Second tableau: A cross-road in the forest. On a mossy rock, a box of pistols. The Duke, Moulinet, then Pontac and the Doctor. After introductions, the Doctor and Pontac move back.

Moulinet.—Let us see, duke—is there no way of reaching a reasonable settlement? I declare, if I helped you thus far, it is because I hoped to hear from you that you would not push the affair beyond measure—

Duk^r.—Have you forgotten what your daughter said to me on parting?

Mou.—That she hoped you would revenge her? Well! My daughter is foolish—dangerous—for exciting you to violence. You should have been exhorted to reconciliation. All can very

well be arranged. It was a passing disagreement between two friends, an unimportant quarrel between two cousins. You will embrace each other, and all will be ended! But a duel, a scandal, a rupture! You do not weigh the consequences!

Duke.—(Smiling.) Poor Monsieur Moulinet! Here, talk of that to Pontac.

Mou.—(To Pontac, who has come back.) Why, of course. Every day such affairs end in peacemaking. It is very easy.

Pontac.—Not when it concerns men like M. Derblay and M. de Bligny. Trust me, Monsieur Moulinet; be silent.

Duke.—(Railing.) Stifle the complaints of the frightened candidate.

Mou.—(Much moved.) Oh! monsieur, that is really at stake! I have nothing before my eyes but the welfare of humanity. I am a brave man, I am, at bottom. I have remorse, I accuse myself of being the cause of what is happening, and I am grieved at the thought that two of my fellow-men are going to butcher each other there soon. See, duke; let us see, my friend; my dear child, be reasonable—do that for me! (With tenderness.) And I promise you shall not find me ungrateful. Don't you see, Monsieur Pontac?

Pon.—It is impossible, Monsieur Moulinet. Silence! Here are the gentlemen.

Mou.—(Groaning.) Oh, my God!

Enter Philippe, Octave, Baron and the Doctor.

(Philippe and the duke exchange a low bow and stand far apart. The baron, Octave, Pontac and Moulinet meet in the centre and draw lots for the weapons.)

Octave.—(Coming to Philippe.) Philippe, listen well. You are a very brave man. You can be told everything. The duke is a noted shot. To equalize chances, the baron and I have asked that time shall not be given him to judge the distance. You will be placed back to back. You will walk each to your place, and at the moment the signal is given you will turn again—

Philippe.—Leave it to me. You see my hand does not trem-

ble. (The witnesses make preparation for the duel. They place Philippe and the duke back to back, pistol in hand.)

Baron.—Take your places, gentlemen. (The duke and Philippe reach their places, after turning up the collars of their coats.)

Pon.—Are you ready?

Philippe and the Duke.—Yes.

Cla.—(Appears at one side of the group of trees.) There they are!

Baron.—Fire! (The duke and Philippe turn, the duke fires quickly. Claire throws herself before Philippe, staggers and falls.)

All.—(With terror.) Ah! (They rush toward her.)

Phil.—Great God! (He takes Claire in his arms and places her on the rock, her head on his shoulder.)

Cla.—I die for you, Philippe—I love you! (She faints.)

Baron.—(To the duke, who stands trembling and pale.) Leave, duke! After such a misfortune, any meeting is impossible.

Duke.—Not before knowing if she lives.

Phil.—(To the doctor.) Is it serious?

Doctor.—No!

Baron.—(To the duke.) No danger. Leave! (The duke leaves with Pontac and Moulinet.)

Cla.—(Comes to herself little by little. She sees Philippe kneeling; she puts her arm around his neck, then, still dazed:) I am dead, am I not, my well beloved, and dead for you? You smile; I am in your arms. Ah, how sweet death is! (She regains her senses. She sits up.) But no—I am suffering—I am alive! (She looks at Philippe with anguish.) A single word! Answer! Do you love me?

Phil.—(Passionately.) I worship you!

Cla.—(Falling in his arms.) Oh! How happy I am going to be! (Curtain.)

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